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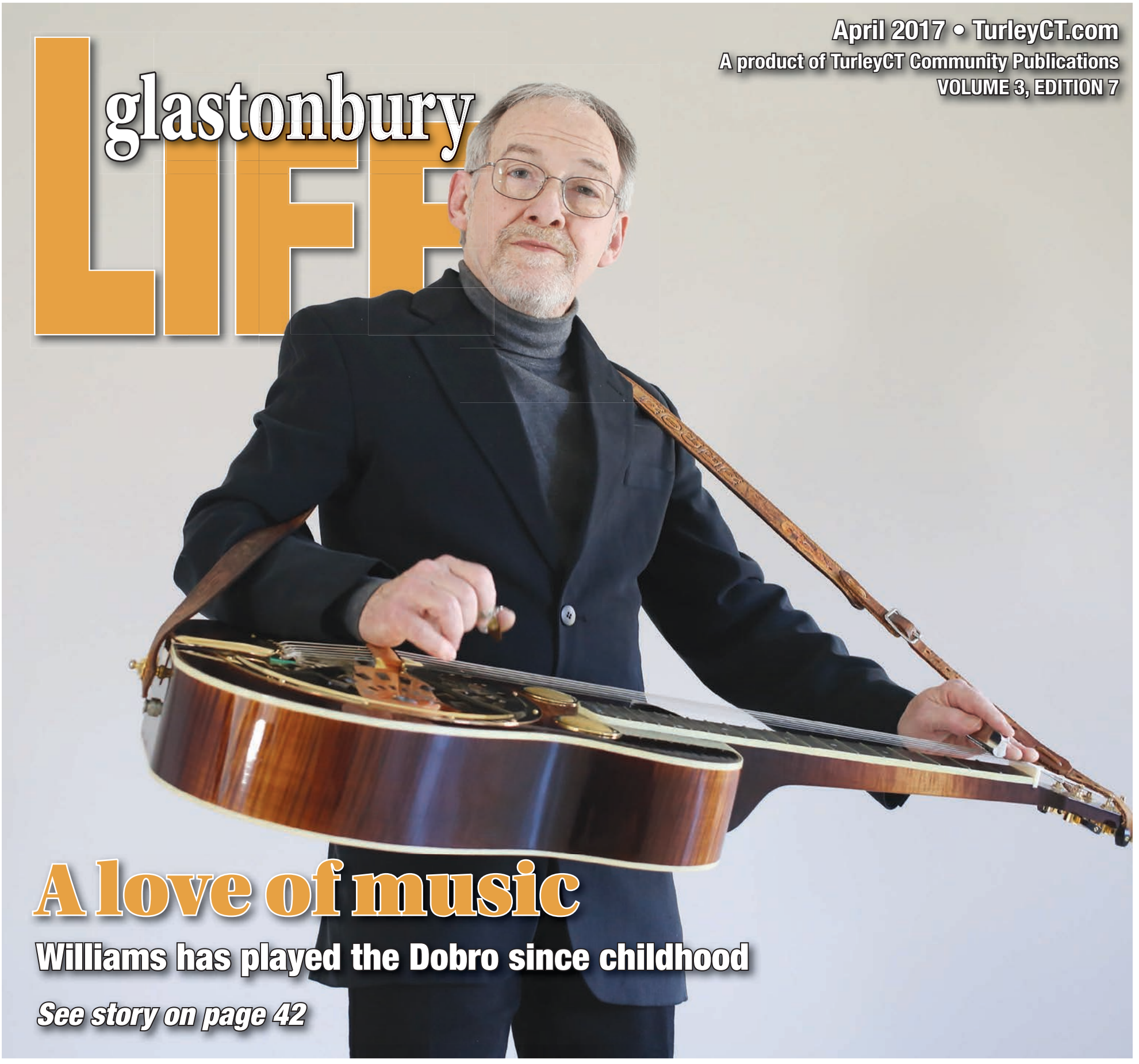
glastonbury LIFE



A love of music

Williams has played the Dobro since childhood

See story on page 42

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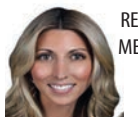
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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"We believe it is always important to have a voice in our democracy." - *Chris Gullotta*

See story page 4

ON THE COVER

Roger Williams is known internationally as a virtuoso on the Dobro, a type of guitar.

Photo by Brian Ambrose
See story page 42

CORRECTION: Rachna Khanna lost her bid for a seat on the town council in South Windsor by 70 votes. The margin of defeat was incorrect in the March issue of Glastonbury LIFE.

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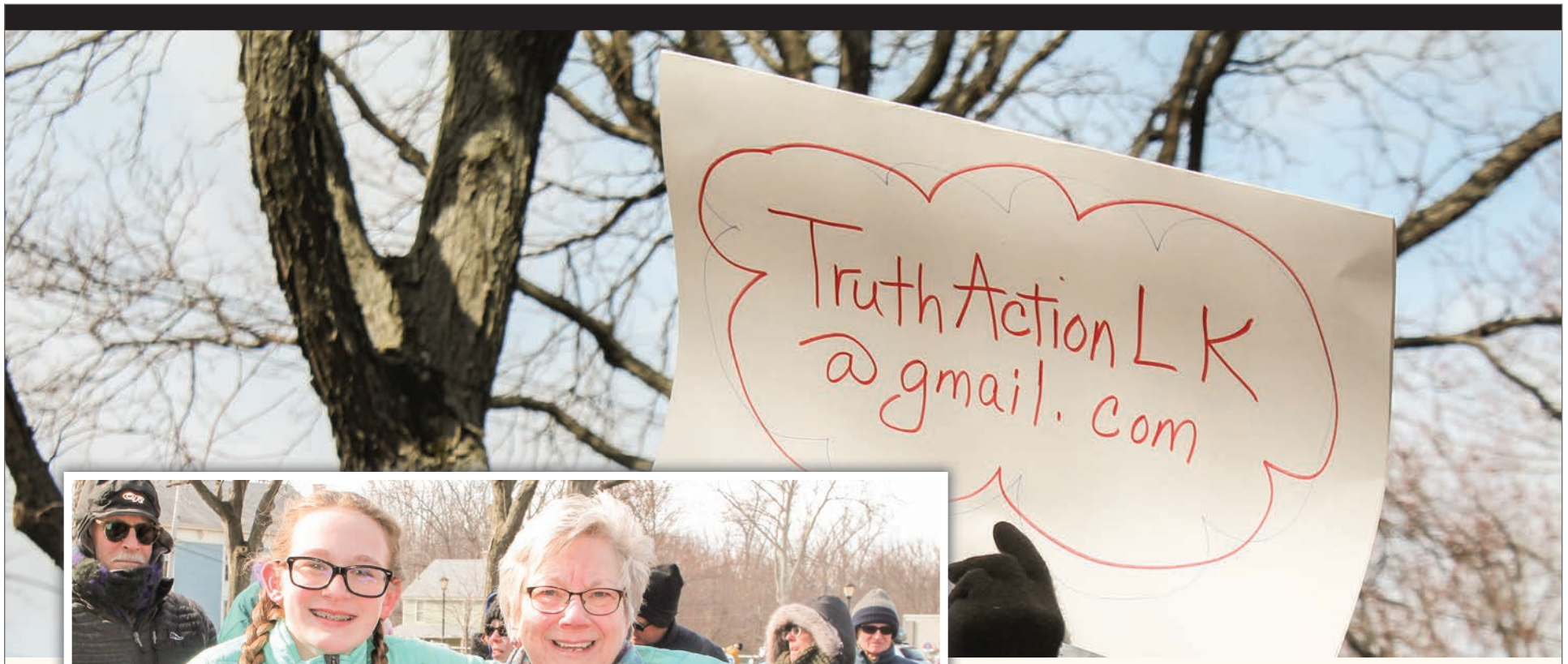

A sign at the March rally promotes TALK: Truth and Action in Love and Kindness.

Courtesy photo

TALK co-founder Jill Grieveson poses with her granddaughter Amelia Searls at the March 4 rally.

New group promotes action, compassion

Rally draws more than 100

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

While in many areas of the United States, contentiousness is at an all-time high, a group of citizens in Glastonbury has come together to make a difference.

"I was feeling helpless regarding all the issues surrounding the Trump Administration and couldn't go to The Women's March," Chris Gullotta said. "My friend, Jill Grieveson, marched in Washington and when she returned I felt as though I couldn't sit idly by another moment so I called her and said, 'We have to start a group in town,' and she said, 'Yes!'".

The mission of TALK: Truth and Action in Love and Kindness, founded by Grieveson and Gullotta, is "to join together in action to fight injustice and protect basic rights for all people through truth, compassion and nonviolence. We are using the non-violent principles of Martin Luther King, Jr. to guide us," Gullotta explained.

The group's first meeting took place in February.

"We thought there would be six people at the first meeting and we had 38," Gullotta said.

The second meeting brought even more people, as well as representatives from similar groups forming in the area. There are now more than 100 people involved with TALK and a list of 300 when members of the other groups are included.

"What's happening is it's kind of exploding and we didn't expect this at all," Gullotta said.

At the first meeting, attendees brainstormed a list of 17 items that they wanted to address. Five of those topics were deemed priorities: environment, immigration, the muzzling of the press, the overreach of executive power, and women's issues.

"We couldn't do everything at once," Gullotta said.

While those topics are the major focus of the group, there are subcommittees that are working on items of interest to other members.

The group is open to people of all backgrounds and ideologies.

"We wanted to do this the way Martin Luther King would do this, with nonviolence, respect and compassion for all sides of the story. We're trying using compassion bring people to compromise. Screaming at each other is not working. Our whole group is about, let's sit down and not be hot headed. Let's see if we can compromise. Let's be reasonable," Gullotta said.

"I feel some of the basic things our country stands for are being threatened, such as welcoming all people regardless of religious beliefs, valuing the contributions of those from other countries, freedom of the

press, and care and concern for our environment. I don't want to sit by and do nothing, but feel my single voice is pretty small. By joining with others who share these concerns, we have a chance to make a real difference. Right here from Glastonbury! I marched – actually, rallied – in Hartford, which was a statement. This group wants to take action, and with compassion and kindness. I believe that's the way to do it," said Judy Benton, a retired community mental health agency director.

Gullotta said the group is not just about discussion. Already activities have included attending various town halls meetings around the state, volunteering for candidates for the recent special election and calling legislators every Monday about various issues.

She said that a sample script for what to say is provided.

"It's really scary the first time you call on the phone," she acknowledged.

One of the group's biggest activities was a march from the Fountain Green on Main Street to town hall.

Courtesy photo

More than 120 people marched from Fountain Green on to town hall in an event organized by TALK: Truth and Action in Love and Kindness.

The early-March rally, attended by more than 120, was held to celebrate the birthday of the U.S. Constitution as well as to introduce TALK to the wider community. In addition to several speakers, the Preamble to the Constitution was read and participants sang "America the Beautiful" and "Blowin' in the Wind."

The group invites residents to join their meetings which are held every other Monday evening.

"We believe it is always important to have a voice in our democracy," Gullotta said. "We support compassion and understanding in the hope that they will help us achieve compromises. If you are not participating in the process, then how can you have a voice?" **GL**

For more information visit the Glastonbury TALK Facebook page, email truthactionlk@gmail.com or call Chris Gullotta at 860-633-9788.

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‘A place where a dog can be a dog’

Free Range Doggy Daycare turns 10

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Courtesy photo

Tim Phelan opened Free Range Doggy Daycare with his childhood friend Erik Hansen. The business is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Tim Phelan’s first experience with a dog was less than auspicious.

“Our first dog bit my face. He was a large middle-aged Bassett hound from the pound,” the Glastonbury native recalled. “He was pretty aggressive and we didn’t know anything about dog. He tore my face open when I was 4.”

Despite the trauma he didn’t grow up fear the animals.

“It never changed my outlook on dogs,” he said.

Today, Phelan owns Free Range Doggy Daycare, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary. The business, founded in February 2007 by Phelan and childhood friend Erik Hansen, offers overnight boarding, basic obedience training and dog grooming, in addition to daycare.

It’s Phelan’s second pet business. He remembers going to a friend’s house to watch a college football game where they were installing an Invisible Fence, which was covered under a patent at the time.

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"They were putting in a fence at the beginning of the game and training the dog by the end of the game," Phelan said. "I was working in a hospital and I didn't like my job."

When the patent ran out for the Invisible Fence, he saw an opportunity. In 1994, he started Free Range Dog Containment, which he continues to operate, while Hansen serves as manager of Free Range Doggy Daycare.

"I thought Invisible Fences was the best idea. I like the idea of having the dogs be free and safe," he said.

Phelan applies that idea of freedom to Free Range Doggy Daycare on Oakwood Drive.

"It's a facility where your dogs can run loose and socialize with other evaluated dogs," he said.

Dogs must pass an evaluation to be accepted at the facility, whether for boarding or the daycare.

Phelan was confident of the concept from the start.

"I knew growing up in town that this town needed another facility for dogs," he said. "There are 3,000 registered dogs in town. I knew we could really use the facility, number one, for the daycare and number two, for the boarding. The uniqueness of the boarding is it's a place where dogs could board and not be locked in a kennel all day."

He approached his friend to see if he was interested.

"Erik was in a job and was kind of burned out, and I said, 'I have this business I want to start.' Everyone I told said I don't know if that's going to fly," he said. "I had the money put aside. I knew I was not going to be running the place full time because of the dog fences."

Free Range Doggy Daycare offers supervised daycare with 6,500 square feet of play areas, both indoors and outdoors.

"There's basically a big arena where dogs can go wild and chase each other around," Phelan said.

The outdoor area features ramps and tunnels. Inside is climate controlled.

While Phelan said that business was slow when they first started, they now have 30 to 35 dogs every day.

"We've grown every year since we opened. We're at a good level where it is now," he said. "We turned our first profit in about seven or eight months."

The staff has grown from just the two partners to eight total employees.

Dogs who are boarding get plenty playtime too. After breakfast in their kennels, the dogs are let out to play.

"They get an entire day of 12 hours of open play with other dogs. They get to run all day with the daycare dogs. When the daycare dogs go home, they're fed dinner and let out and then they're back in the kennel. They're not kenneled all day," he explained.

On the weekends there are three play periods spread throughout the day.

Shiloh, a Shiba Inu belonging to Shawn and Jennifer Googins of Glastonbury, has been going to Free Range since 2009 for boarding, daycare and grooming .

"The entire staff is fantastic and knowledgeable. They treat your pets as if they were their own pets. Our dog loves to go to Free Range. They keep the pets safe, contact you if there are any problems," Shawn Googins said. "Our dog started having seizures and they stayed with Shiloh, notified us immediately, researched what they saw and gave us the full situation. Since then Shiloh has proper medication and hasn't had any problems since. I cannot say enough great things about Free Range."

Phelan enjoys just spending time with the dogs.

"The most interesting thing is watching the behavior of dogs and how they socialize and interact. They're like schoolkids," he said.

While many of the daycare customers are working people who drop off their pets in the morning and pick them up in the evening, Phelan said that even those who are home all day might want to think about using the service to give their dogs the opportunity to tire themselves out and be with other dogs.

"It's a place where a dog can be a dog and burn that excess fuel they have," Phelan said. "That's really it." **GL**

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Lynn Damon photo

From the stage to the pulpit

Larissa Forsythe brings special gifts to her ministry

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Larissa Forsythe expected to have a career teaching acting to college students. Instead, she's the new associate minister at the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury.

That's not to say she isn't using some of the skills she learned while earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in theater or as a professional actor, or for that matter, her time working at a St. Louis-area Wal-Mart while in graduate school. They're all part of why she's here.

Forsythe moved all over the country with her family. She was

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born in Missouri and spent several years as a young child in Colorado, where her family owned a ski shop near what was then known as the Purgatory ski area. Life there was good, until the snow stopped. After five years of drought, her family moved to Illinois, which she described as "a really neat place." From there they moved to Indiana, back to Colorado, and then to horse country in central Florida, where she attended high school. Church was not part of her family's life.

She said she missed the mountains and enrolled in Western Carolina University near North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains.

She majored in theater and returned after graduation to the St. Louis area with her family, then earned a master's degree in fine arts in acting at St. Charles College, just short of the city. "My goal was to teach college students," she said. During graduate school she worked at a Wal-Mart with a "really nice" colleague who was a fundamentalist Christian and talked a lot about her beliefs.

Forsythe had two dreams about Jesus, and after the second felt an urge to go to church. She opened the yellow pages and found an Episcopal church nearby. "I felt comfortable there," she said. "The people were kind." She talked with the priest there, a woman, about baptism and other things, and at 25 decided to be baptized and, later, confirmed there.

"Her sermons are relevant, full of energy and current."

– Laura Perry

"I was involved in that church for five years," she said. "I did choir and all that stuff."

Her marriage was failing, and not long after, she and her husband divorced. She remarried three years later and got involved in a United Church of Christ congregation near their home. "I just loved it," she said. While her first husband wasn't supportive of her interest in religion, her new husband, Tom Miles, was.

After two years, she had what she called "another of those thoughts that weren't mine." She had left the professional theater five years before and was working as a legal assistant. "I was wondering why I am here," she said. I took the LSAT. I wanted to make a difference."

"Valentine's Day, 2010, I was sitting in church and I heard 'seminary' in my head," she said. "My immediate reaction was to think 'wrong number'. That was the craziest idea ever."

Then it happened in the car on the way home. "I heard 'seminary!' again," she said.

Instead of going to law school, Forsythe enrolled in Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Grove, a suburb of St. Louis. She was a top student there and before graduating served as pastor at two small country churches. After graduation she started a two-year term as the pastor of St. Philip's United Church of Christ south of St. Louis.

She said she wasn't looking to leave, but she acknowledged that she was starting to wonder if that was the right place for her long-term. Then she heard from the South Glastonbury church.

Together, they started a process that included Skype conversations, YouTube videos of her sermons and a personal meeting. Folks here had no doubt about her gifts for ministry.

"We were given Larissa's resume by the United Church of Christ conference and our group of eight did a Skype interview with her," said Laura Perry, a member of the search committee. "We were all so touched by the interview. She feels very genuine and engaged. I am the chairperson for the adult faith enrichment team at church and she has joined our team. We have had two meeting with her so far and her energy is contagious."

She continued, "Her sermons are relevant, full of energy and current. She preaches without notes in front

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of her, and is able to give a thoughtful, organized sermon with contemporary connections from her own life, Bible references, and academic support. Very impressive. I think her skills and talent compliment Rev. Dick Allen's and she realizes South Church is a special place that she can learn and grow from while sharing her gifts. She is very interested in social justice issues and is actively getting involved at the community level. Her husband, Tom Miles, and eight-year-old son Noah are joining her in some of these causes as well. We love her and her family."

Cheryl Edison met Forsythe about three months ago on the day the church called her to serve here. She said she appreciates Forsythe's energy and passion, as well as her understanding of family life. "Larissa is a working mom and wife that happens to be a minister. She understands the struggles of family work life balance. It is from that perspective I believe she will shine and people will find her message meaningful," she said.

The Rev. Dick Allen, the church's senior minister, met Forsythe during the pastoral search process.

"Eventually, we met her in person," he said of Forsythe's visit here. "That interview confirmed all our hunches about her gifts for ministry!"

Allen said he's impressed by many aspects of Forsythe's life and ministry, including her background in the theater.

"She is as committed to her parenting as she is to her ministry work," he said. "She has a background in drama which contributes mightily to her preaching style and a passion for justice and is grounded in the Biblical mandate to do justice, and she feels called to be present to people who are hurting."

It appears those warm feelings go both ways.

Forsythe said she especially enjoys the congregation's commitment to collaborative ministry. "Ministry alone is exhausting. Ministry with others is exhilarating," she said. "Not just with Dick, but with the whole church." **GL**

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Always an artist

Allegra Anderson opens new studio in South Glastonbury

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Allegra Anderson grew up in a family of artists, so it should be no surprise that her career is in the arts as well.

Anderson, who won an Emmy for her work on a video about people affected by Hurricane Katrina, was influenced early on by her father, a technical artist in photography and videography, and her mother, an accomplished painter in oils and pastels.

"I sort of followed in his footsteps," she said of her father.

When she was a child, she enjoyed summers at the Connecticut shore with her family and enrolled in a photography program in Guilford. "They encouraged me and started me with a point-and-shoot," she said.

As a student at East Catholic High School she took photography electives, including learning how to work in a darkroom and doing some photography with a digital camera on her own.

She knew she wanted a career in the arts and enrolled in a Tufts University program affiliated with the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. She took art classes, including photography, film-making and art history there, along with traditional academic courses at Tufts.

After graduation, she applied for a job at This Old House in Concord, Mass. Where she did still photography for them during production and worked on documentaries for American Public Television.

Among the documentaries is New Orleans: Getting Back to Normal, for which she served as a supervising producer. The 2010 video, which features several New Orleans residents talking about their experiences during and in the five

"She secured us not one, but two nominations and as a producer she beat out Jon Stewart and even Sting for the coveted prize, this mind you, on a project that had less in its entire budget than those star vehicles had in their coffee allowance."

– David Vos

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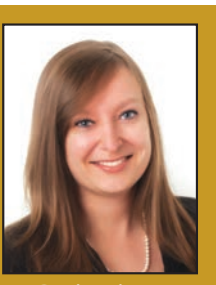
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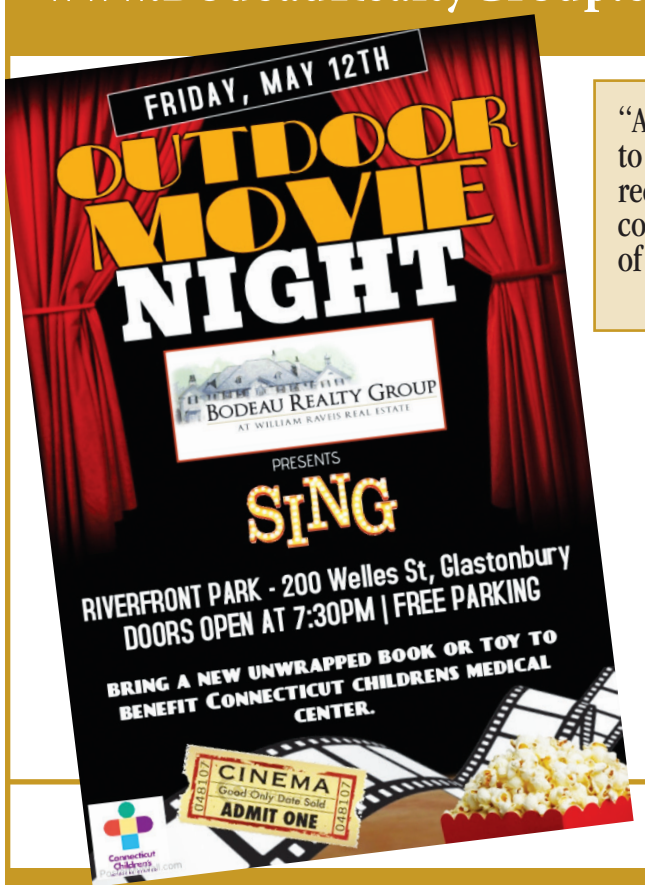
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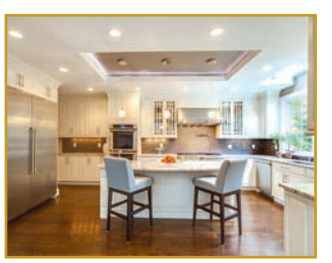

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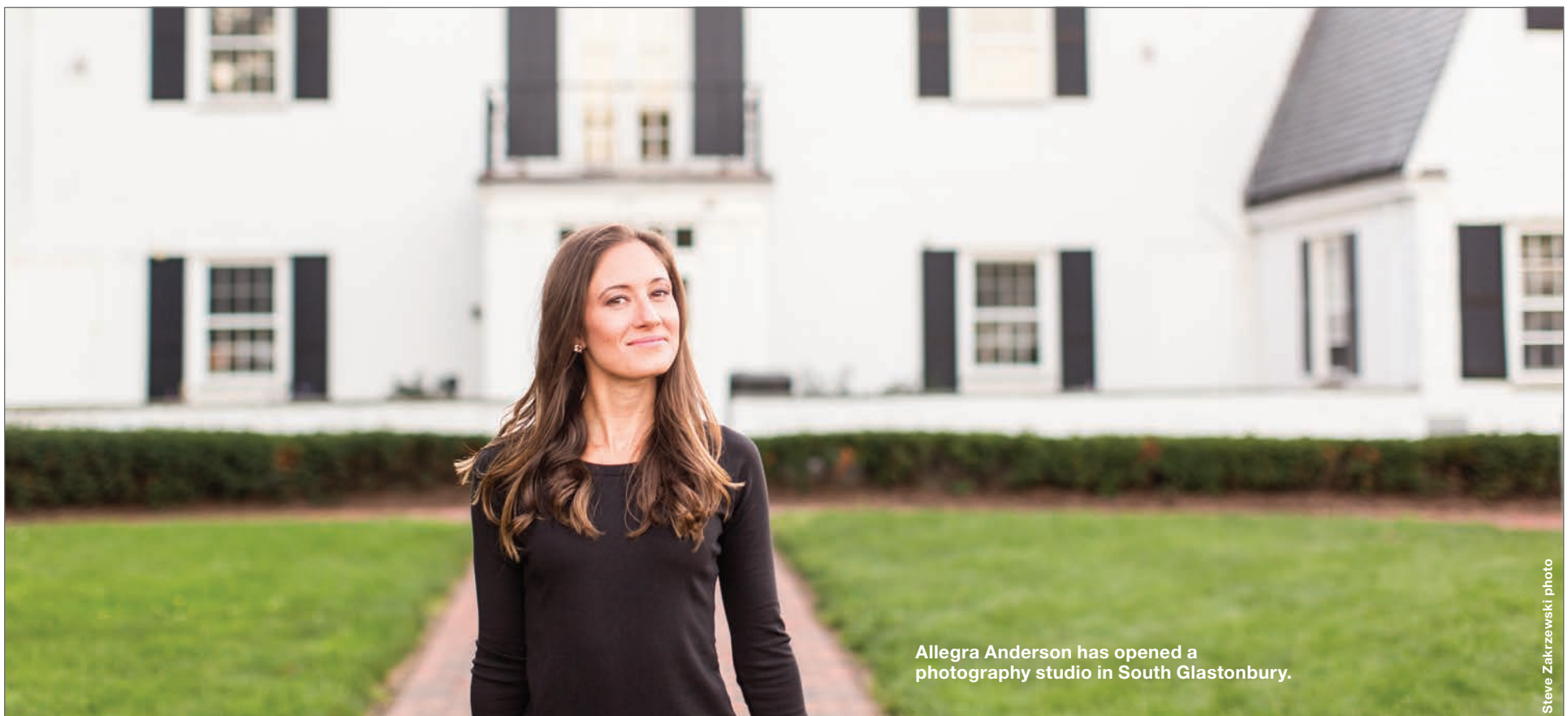

Allegra Anderson has opened a photography studio in South Glastonbury.

Steve Zakrzewski photo

years after Hurricane Katrina, won an Emmy for Outstanding Special Class Special.

Anderson continued to work at This Old House, where she shot before-and-after photos, pictures for magazines and advertisements, behind-the-scenes photos, and portraits for five years. On the side, she did wedding photography for private clients.

In 2013 she moved to Glastonbury, where she worked from her home and did a lot of work on location. She opened a new studio on Main Street last November.

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Anderson described herself as a lifestyle photographer. "I enjoy telling the story of what people do," she said. She also enjoys working for food and home and garden publications and does publicity and other work for businesses, including the local office of Gordon & Rees, a national law firm.

Liz Mahoney, the office administrator at Gordon & Rees, described her as "the perfect combination of personable and professional," adding, "She is very passionate about what she does, and it shows in the quality of her work."

David Vos, who was the executive producer and director at This Old House when Anderson worked there and also was the executive producer of the New Orleans documentary, watched Anderson's role grow over the years as she advanced from answering phones as a temporary employee to being an Emmy award-winning producer.

"She started by helping out with the editors and post production department, largely I think, because her desk adjoined their editing bays," he said. "This grew until she was depended on for all kinds of editing projects and responsibilities. When a set production assistant couldn't show up, Allegra threw in and ran that whole endeavor, arranging schedules, script notes, and travel for the entire crew. She always had a point of view and the most gracious way of letting it be known, and she wanted and expected more from everyone, herself, co-workers and most importantly the show itself. She has this delightful way of pointing out what should be, and with humor so you can't help but laugh as she makes you see the potential for a new approach."

Vos credited her with saving the award-winning documentary after one of its main characters was reluctant to sign a release.

"I threw up my hands," he said. "Without this woman's appearance, the film would be so hobbled I pledged to pull the plug on the whole project. How Allegra turned this around and magically produced the signed release continues to baffle me. The answer is probably both simple and profound. Allegra's approach is simple, yet profound; she can't do anything in half steps. She has an evangelical zeal in believing in everything she does and the people who she chooses to work with. In the greatest of film traditions, she loves her subjects."

Vos also credited Anderson with securing Emmy nominations for the film.

"Not happy enough with merely saving our little film, she went on to have it considered for a national Emmy. She secured us not one, but two nominations and as a producer she beat out Jon Stewart and even Sting for the coveted prize, this mind you, on a project that had less in its entire budget than those star vehicles had in their coffee allowance."

Vos watched as Anderson expanded her photography work on the show and praised her courage in deciding to leave to open her own business.

"She would easily be a major producer, if not executive had she stayed, but she chose to start over and stick to her real love," he said.

"When I see Allegra's work these days I always smile," he said. "Her love of food and the table fills the frames, and then some. Her delight in people and love and fellowship is pungent in the portraits she makes. To hear from people lucky enough to work with her, they always recount the blessings of her abundant generosity of spirit; a positive, knowing artist that loves what she does and loves sharing it."

Although they haven't worked together for four years, Vos continues to follow Anderson's career and looks forward to working with her again. "Sometimes I'm a little wistful that I don't have Allegra in my daily life as we cook up all kinds of magic," he said. "But I know she's a star and someday we'll work together again on something and I will be the lucky recipient of her many gifts." **GL**

Allegra Anderson Photography is at 891 Main Street in South Glastonbury. To learn more, call 860-266-5756 or visit allegraanderson.com.

7 Things You Must Know Before Putting Your Wethersfield Home Up For Sale

WETHERSFIELD - A new report has just been released which reveals 7 costly mistakes that most homeowners make when selling their home, and a 9 Step System that can help you sell your home fast and for the most amount of money.

This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today's market. The fact of the matter is that fully three quarters of homesellers don't get what they want for their home and become disillusioned and - worse - financially disadvantaged when they put their home on the market.

As this report uncovers, most homesellers make 7 deadly mistakes that cost them literally thousands of dollars. The good news is that each and every one of these mistakes is entirely preventible.

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This report is courtesy of Sanam Solati Yurczyk, REALTOR®, EXIT Realty Black Rock. Not intended to solicit properties already listed for sale.

Broken system, broken families

Local couple helps parents who have lost custody of their children

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Monica and Peter Szymonik have seen heartbreak up close. The couple, who married after meeting at a hearing at the state capitol a few years ago, have both lost custody of children from a previous marriage.

They continue to fight, in family court and elsewhere, and have become committed activists working to help others who have suffered as they have.

"The system is tough," said Monica, who lost custody of her son, Elias, six years ago when he was four. "I've been jumping through hoops for many years."

She said she was spending daytime hours with Elias, who has autism and was working with a therapist during the day, and working as a waitress in the evening.

But, she said, when the court discovered that she has a degree in nutrition, she was deprived of her custody agreement because she wasn't working in her field.

Peter is in a similar situation. He lost custody of two sons, Jason, now 15, and Adam, now 12. Like Elias, Adam has autism.

Monica, who has a bachelor's degree in nutritional sciences from UCONN, is a certified health coach specializing in marital and child custody transitions and a certified reflexologist in addition to being an advocate for equal parental rights, an author and a civil rights activist.

Peter has a UCONN degree in history and political science. He works for a Hartford-area law firm and is a constitutional and civil rights activist and autism advocate.

Both have become coaches and advocates, not only for themselves, but for others who have lost custody of children after a divorce.

Monica has written "Broken System, Broken Heart," which she describes as a "soup to nuts guide to protecting your health in the aftermath of a custody battle." The book, with a foreword written by Peter, was designed to let others in a similar situation know they are not alone and to give them suggestions for coping with the emotional, spiritual, legal and physical issues that can arise.

"Everything in the book goes to the fact that the reader just went through a divorce and lost everything," she said. "It says I know your suffering."

"It tells people what they should do and what they should not do when they get divorced," Peter added. "It's a survival guide."

Monica said it's different from most books, which assume that a divorced parent has custody of a child. "I hate the term 'win custody'," she said.

Peter said research has shown that children who have been barred from seeing a parent often turn to recreational drugs and other risky behavior. Parents often fare no better.

"Normal, happy, healthy individuals can be driven to the edge by their experiences in the family court

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system," he said.

In the book, Monica said she is aware that many people who know that she doesn't have custody of her son assume she did something wrong and acknowledged that she would have thought the same – before it happened to her.

"It's an experience that can bring any parent to the brink of an internal nuclear meltdown," she said, adding that custody issues can result in feelings of isolation, hopelessness, grief, shame, fear and mistrust, and anger. She said post-traumatic stress disorder is common and that once diagnosed, it may be used as a reason not to change a custody arrangement.

In the first part of the book, she writes about her own experiences over the past few years. The second section is dedicated to suggestions for healing, including improving nutrition, practicing meditation and gratitude, exercising, finding inspiration in the writings of Nelson Mandela and others who have suffered, and refusing to give up. She also lists websites and contact information for support and advocacy groups and individuals.

Sarah Summers, who leads a non-profit group with Monica, said she is impressed by her peaceful determination. "Her tenacity to keep pushing toward what's right in the most peaceful way is admirable," she said. "Monica is an incredible mother, wife, business woman, and friend. She is someone I seek out for advice almost daily. What she has been through in the family court system is enough to completely break any good parent to pieces, but she defies that by helping others maneuver their way and understand their rights. She's a confidant, an advisor, a counselor, an advocate, and an instructor, but most of all a friend to others going through what she and Peter went through."

Another woman, who asked not to be identified because of the delicate nature of her case, has known Monica for almost two years and also referred to her tenacity.

"She was my moral support and helped me cope during my time in court with custody issues," she said. "Her vast wealth of knowledge, calming energy and tenacious spirit is what impressed me most. She is a very strong individual who is an amazing mother. She has become a strong and influential advocate for equal rights parenting in her community and abroad. I'm glad she came into my life when she did. She helped keep me focused and was my sounding board. I learned so much from her and continue to do so."

Nancy Thompson photo

Monica and Peter Szymonik, both of whom have lost custody of children, continue to fight in court and in the legislature and to advocate for others in a similar situation. The child in the photo is their daughter, Sadie.

The Szymoniks are planning a second book as well as an update of "Broken System, Broken Heart" to further help parents, including a section for fathers like Peter.

"If I'd had that book in 2008 I wouldn't have made the mistakes I made," he said. **GL**

To learn more, visit groundworktohealth.com. "Broken System, Broken Heart" is available there and on Amazon.com.

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Good Friday, April 14 | 7:00pm
Worship service featuring *Jesu, meine Freude* by J.S. Bach. AHCC's choir and soloists help us begin our journey from Cross to Tomb to Resurrection.

Easter Sunday, April 16 | 9:00 & 10:30am
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Kim Manning, principal/chief executive officer, first joined the company as an account executive.

Steve Wolfberg, principal/chief creative and growth officer, notes, "People don't want to buy something; they want to buy into something."

Courtesy photos

'Truth Wins' at Cronin

Ad agency celebrates 70th anniversary

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Bill Cronin Sr. probably wouldn't recognize the agency that bears his name. Cronin opened his eponymous advertising company in 1947 with a focus on serving small community banks. He would drive around the area, making stops to see if folks were interested in print advertising. The post-World War II environment was considerably different from today's technologically focused marketing landscape.

In the early 1970s, Bill Cronin Jr. and a couple of partners took over Cronin and Company. With no children who were interested in the family business, Cronin passed the reins in 2008 to long-time employees Kim Manning and Steve Wolfberg.

The agency started out in Hartford before coming to Glastonbury in 1981, when it moved to space on the corner of New London Turnpike and Hebron Avenue. Four years later, they moved to 655 Winding Brook before settling in 1991 at 50 Nye Road, where they are housed in almost 25,000 square feet of space.

The firm is celebrating its 70th year with some major changes, including a new logo and a shortening of the name to just "Cronin."

"Basically what we did was we rebranded the agency," said Manning, who's been with the agency for about 25 years and now serves as principal and chief executive officer. "We wanted to refresh our outward expression to reflect the agency we really are today. The name Cronin and Company has a very rich legacy. One of the things we wanted to portray was to be as relevant as we possibly could, and the 'and company' portion of the name felt a little old. 'Cronin' is where the teeth is and where the equity is."

"For years, people would just say 'Cronin,'" Wolfberg, principal and chief creative and growth officer, said. "You get to it a lot faster with Cronin. It's a reflection of the times."

The company's new logo features a pixel, which he said represents the emphasis on digital communications.

Cronin is a full-service agency whose offerings include strategy and analytics, advertising, content development, media planning, buying and optimization, digital services, public relations, social media, direct marketing, and research.

They also have a new tagline, "Truth Wins."

"We never had a position line before. We wanted to do something that encapsulates what we stand for. People don't want to buy something; they want to buy into something," said Wolfberg, who's been with the agency since 1989.

He said the message especially resonates in these times with "truth and lies, and real news and fake news.

"People are really connecting to that. Truth is part of who we are as company," he said. "We say truth is the most powerful sales tool a brand has. It's about finding and telling the truth, as branders and as people."

The type of work that Cronin has done has evolved through the years. More than half the work the agency produces is in support of digital projects and nearly 70 percent of all media placed by the agency last year fell in the digital realm. Cronin's technology and innovation team now comprises a quarter of the company's 77 employees.

"The agency business, and the marketing business as a whole, has been extremely volatile. Seismic shifts have happened in our business. Going back 25 years when I started, print was the primary vehicle of communication. Then, there was television and most recently, digital has really exploded and really changed the way all agencies do business, including us. It's a complicated landscape that's always changing. There's always new technology and new channels to reach people. Cronin is an integrated agency. We offer many different marketing disciplines here under one roof. What we have done as the world has evolved, we too have evolved and adapted our offerings," Manning said. "The sound bite is it's about reaching the right person in the right place at the right time at the right cost."

The way that happens is continually changing.

"The world has gone from broadcasting to narrow-casting. We focus more and more on targeting people directly, measuring how they respond and optimizing messages to make them more effective. That's what we've become very good at," Wolfberg noted. "For example, right now, you're leaving cookies on that computer. It knows what type of website you go to."

Based on that – and how a potential consumer reacts to a website – changes can be made to the website, such as changing a color or how information is displayed.

"It's very technical. It's not 'spray and pray' like it used to be. It's super, super targeted with the messages," Wolfberg said.

Cronin works with a number of national and regional brands, such as Amica Mutual Insurance Company, McDonald's and Liberty Bank.

"Our average client tenure is seven or eight years. That's very long for our business. These are clients that stay and they stay for a reason. We like to think we're doing very solid work for them, delivering value for that relationship," Manning said.

Liberty Bank has been a Cronin client for 13 years.

"My relationship with Cronin started long before when I was with SIS Bank in Springfield, Mass., so in total I've worked with various teams at Cronin for 20-plus years. At that time Steve Wolfberg was a senior copywriter and I was in my first bank marketing position so we have kind of grown up together," said Patricia Jatkevicius, EVP/chief marketing officer, Liberty Bank. "They not only take time to really know and understand the client and the brand, they make certain everyone that works on the account has a deep knowledge of the client industry as well so it truly becomes a future-focused strategic partnership. We probably spend more time discussing the future than we do the present. They are not about 'creating ads.' They are 100 percent focused on building the brand for the long haul. The talent they bring to the table is without question, quite exceptional, especially on the creative side. Sharp, curious minds with thoughtful opinions and a willingness to engage in real conversations. Because it is a partnership they are quite comfortable challenging client perceptions and directives in a positive way, sometimes forcing us to think way outside our traditional comfort zones. Back in the SIS Bank days many, many years ago the phrase 'sweaty palm moment' was used when presenting some especially edgy creative. We still use that phrase today, and those moments usually lead to some of our best and most effective work."

She noted that it's about more than creativity.

"They are as focused on the results as the client. It's not about

A key element of Cronin's new logo is the pixel which represents digital marketing.

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just about developing creative that cuts through the clutter or is cutting edge. It is always about achieving and most times exceeding the original objectives," she said.

In addition to retaining clients, Cronin also strives to keep employees.

"We're only as good as the talent we have. We invest in top-tier talent, top-tier technology, top-tier tools. That philosophy has benefitted us," Manning said. "The culture is very special here. We have been very fortunate. Our employees can work anywhere they want to work; they choose to work here for a reason. Not only are they doing top caliber work, but they like to work here. The reason is because they are treated very well. It's a very, very fun culture."

That includes activities such as Friday breakfasts, chili cook-offs and Cronin Cares, a week in August when employees are encouraged to do volunteer work.

"We have an important understanding that if [employees] are not happy at home, they're not happy at work. Work/life balance is encouraged," Wolfberg said.

While many agencies have come and gone, Wolfberg noted that consistency has been important to Cronin's continued success.

"We bought in 2008; that was easy. Then 2009 hit, and it was, 'Do we really need all those paper clips?' What it takes is we don't get too high and we don't get too low. We stay the course and take the good with bad, and that's really worked for us," he said.

And while they've worked for various major clients, it's some of their nonprofit work that stands out in their minds as favorite projects, including a film trailer that they did for Dana Farber and the Jimmy Fund almost 20 years ago.

"I think that was a career high point and the reason it was a career high point was who the client is and we were helping children with cancer. It was a very, very powerful example of finding the truth and leveraging the truth. To this day that trailer is still the top fundraising trailer the Jimmy Fund has had," Manning said.

Wolfberg is also proud of two television commercials they created for the Connecticut Department of Public Health promoting mammograms. The commercials came to the attention of the national Susan G. Komen foundation and ended up running during an episode of the television series "Murphy Brown." The episode ran without commercials except for the ones the agency did, which had been tagged with the Susan G. Komen information. The team went to Dallas and had the opportunity to meet with Nancy Brinker, the organization's founder.

"It was a very emotional, authentic story," Wolfberg said. "When you can do work that saves lives, that's pretty cool."

While the media may have changed, Cronin's focus on creative excellence has remained the same.

"This is a passion-based business. We do our best work when we can tap into that passion, regardless of what type of category the client is," Manning said.

Wolfberg said it comes back to Cronin's new tag line, "Truth Wins."

"It's who we are as a company and who we are as people," he said. "As a famous expert, your mother, once said, 'Tell the truth, it's easier to remember.' Truth can lead to advertising that's unforgettable." GL

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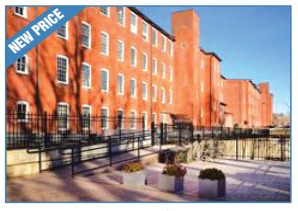
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News roundup

Clark House program scheduled

The town's housing authority is sponsoring a brunch to introduce guests to the Herbert T. Clark House and explain the services offered there. The free brunch, which will include a tour, entertainment and speakers, will take place April 27 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the facility on Canione Road.

The Herbert T. Clark House, managed by the housing authority, offers two levels of supportive senior housing, with 45 apartments for residents who need some help with chores and their noon meal as well as a weekly visit from a wellness nurse. Residents who need more care can live in 25 units that offer assisted living services such as dressing, medication supervision, cleaning and three daily meals.

Anyone interested in attending or learning more may call 860-652-7623 no later than April 24.

Roundabout construction to begin

Construction of two roundabouts on Hebron Avenue are scheduled to start this year. The Hebron Avenue/New London Turnpike roundabout is slated to start in early spring as soon as the weather allows.

A total of seven stages have been planned as follows:

Stage 1: temporary widening of both roads to allow for traffic flow in later phases of construction. The existing traffic signal will continue to operate.

State 2: The traffic signal will be removed and a roundabout flow will be established using traffic drums, warning lights and other equipment to help motorists through the intersection.

States 3, 4, 5 and 6: Each approach, two on each road, will be closed one at a time. Businesses will remain open and access to business driveways will be maintained.

Stage 7: Construction of the center island of the roundabout will take place.

To learn more, visit Glastonbury-ct.gov/roundabout or contact Daniel Pennington, the town engineer, at 860-652-7736.

Town officials plan to build the second roundabout, at the intersection of Hebron Avenue and House Street, during the second half of the year.

Grand list is up

The town's grand list has been calculated at $3,972,381,000, an increase of 1.46 over the 2015 figure. That amount is subject to adjustment by the board of assessment appeals after it holds hearings in April and any appeals taken to court.

Totals for the three types of personal property show an overall increase of $57.3 million. Of that amount, $27.7 million, or .8 percent, is in real estate, $16.5 million, or 10.81 percent is personal property, and $13.1 million, of 4.53 percent is for motor vehicles.

Assessor Nicole Lintereur said the 1.46 percent increase is the highest since 2007.

The first seven of the town's top 10 taxpayers were the same as last year, with Connecticut Light & Power Company leading the way with an assessed value of $41.6 million.

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Summer learning, summer fun

The local school system is sponsoring several enrichment camps this summer, with a wide range of subjects.

They include the following: Bringing Books to Life Through Play f or students entering kindergarten through fifth grade; Coding Camp for students entering grades 6 through 8; iCode with the Dash Robot for students entering grades 4 through 6; Chess Camp with sessions for students entering grades 2 through 6 and grades 7 through 12; Summer Prose for students entering grades 6 through 9; Tomahawk Training Camp for students entering grades 9 through 12; English Language Learning Summer Camp with sessions for students now in kindergarten and first grade, in grades 2 through 4, and in grades 5 through 8; and language camps for a variety of grade levels featuring French, Spanish, Chinese and Russian. **GL**

Getting Married?
Let us know!
LIFE is interested in publishing engagement and wedding announcements. Send them to LIFE Editor at 540 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070 or e-mail aalbair@turleyct.com. There is no charge.

MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

April Events

Campus Visits. SSC Atrium. Regional representatives will be on campus to discuss transfer opportunities. Info: Robert C. Turner, Jr. at 860-512-3328 or email rturner@manchestercc.edu.

Bay Path University. 4/5 and 4/19, 10 a.m.
Eastern Connecticut State University. 4/5, 10 a.m.
University of Saint Joseph. 4/11, 10 a.m.
Central Connecticut State University. 4/13, 10 a.m.
University of New Haven. 4/24, 10 a.m.

Passover Seder. 4/5, 6 p.m., Culinary Arts Center, SSC. $6, students; $12, community. The annual Passover Seder features a delicious kosher-style dinner hosted by the International Foods class. It is open to everyone interested in or curious about the Jewish Passover Holiday. This year's cuisine is Moroccan. Reservations required; purchase with a credit card by calling 860-512-3648 or by visiting the Bursar's Office, M–Th, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Info: Valerie Kier at 860-512-2760 or email vkier@manchestercc.edu.

Tim Seibles Poetry Reading. 4/5, 8 p.m., GPA Community Commons. Tim Seibles is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Body Moves* (1988), *Hurdy-Gurdy* (1992), *Hammerlock* (1999), *Buffalo Head Solos* (2004), and *Fast Animal* (2012), which won the Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize and was nominated for a 2012 National Book Award. He teaches at Old Dominion University. Info: Steve Straight at 860-512-2688, or email sstraight@manchestercc.edu.

Community Forum on Opioid Prevention and Intervention. 4/8, 10 a.m., GPA Community Commons. Because of the current opioid epidemic in Connecticut and the nation, the CT Association for Addiction Professionals and the MCC Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counselors Club will be hosting a forum, focusing on what can be done to prevent and intervene in this crisis. State legislators, addiction counselors and medical and prevention personnel will compromise the panel. Info: Bobbi Fox at 860-977-1448, or email bfox@manchestercc.edu.

National Library Week Book Sale. 4/10, 4/11 and 4/12, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Library, LRC. A variety of fiction, non-fiction, children's books, books for young adults, textbooks, DVDs, CDs, and books on CD will be on sale. Info: Paula Pini at 860-512-2877, email ppini@manchestercc.edu or visit www.manchestercc.edu/library.

Considering Transferring to Central Connecticut State University? 4/13 and 4/27, 9 a.m., SSC L108. CCSU advisors will be available to meet one-on-one with prospective students to discuss course selection and transfer opportunities. Those interested can sign up in the SSC L-108. Space is limited. Info: Robert Turner, Jr. at 860-512-3328 or email rturner@manchestercc.edu.

Considering Transferring to Eastern Connecticut State University? 4/24 and 4/25, 9 a.m., SSC L108. ECSU advisors will be available to meet one-on-one with prospective students to discuss course selection and transfer opportunities. Those interested can sign up in the SSC L-108. Space is limited. Info: Robert Turner, Jr. at 860-512-3328 or email rturner@manchestercc.edu.

25th Annual Evening of Fine Wines. 4/28, 7 p.m., SSC. Join us for MCC's largest fundraiser to support student scholarships, programming and support services. Celebrate the 25th anniversary with live music by Latanya Farrell, a live auction guest emceed by Faith Middleton of WNPR's "The Faith Middleton FOOD Schmooze" and Chris Prosperi, chef and co-owner of Metro Bis. Enjoy live and silent auctions; more than 25 wine, beer and beverage tasting tables; and elegant, hors d'ouevres prepared and served by MCC's culinary arts students. Purchase tickets at www.mccgiving.org. Info: Kisha Zullo at 860-512-2922 or email wines@manchestercc.edu.

All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted, and are subject to change without notice. For current information or notices of cancellation, click on "View All Events" on MCC's web site: www.manchestercc.edu.

4/2017

Business Notes

Courtesy photos

Cronin, a local marketing agency, has promoted one person and hired five new employees.

Kara Barrepski of East Hampton has been promoted from brand manager to senior brand manager on the agency's brand management team. She has abachelor's degree in business marketing from Quinnipiac University.

Megan Cushman , a Glastonbury resident, joined the agency's brand management team as a brand supervisor. She has a bachelor's degree from Philadelphia University.

Katie Ercolani of West Hartford joined the agency's brand management team as a brand manager. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in marketing.

Jennifer Leone of Wallingford joined the agency's technology and innovation team as a project manager. She has a bachelor's degree in management with a minor in marketing from Quinnipiac University.

Katie Lukas of Canton joined the agency's technology and innovation team as a director of digital strategy and technology.

Alia Shafi of West Hartford joined the agency's brand management team as a brand manager. She has a bachelor's degree in communications with an emphasis in advertising and public relations from the University of Hartford.

Joshua Gottfried and Matthew Somberg, independent financial advisors affiliated with **Commonwealth Financial Network** and partners and founders of **Gottfried & Somberg Wealth Management, LLC**, have been invited to Commonwealth's 2017 Chairman's Retreat, a distinction that recognizes the most successful financial advisors based on a ranking of annual production among Commonwealth's network of 1,710 financial advisors.

Susan LaFleur, manager of the local **McDonald's,** is among the winners of the company's Outstanding Restaurant Manager award for Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. The award recognizes the top 10 percent of managers nationwide. **GL**

Hassett & George, P.C. has opened a law office at 628 Hebron Ave. The firm's expansion will give its clients another option in addition to its office on Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury.

Your Thoughts

While most people would agree that the winter was on the mild side, Mother Nature still did offer her share of weather surprises. With ever-increasing daylight and an official season change upon us, Glastonbury LIFE ventured outdoors on a recent balmy day to find out what folks are most looking forward to now that spring is truly upon us. Here is some of what they said:

The weather because I work outside and I don't like the cold weather. I like it when it's 65 to 70.
– *Nick Reeves*

Getting outside again and being able to adventure and explore. I like the warm weather and being able to explore. I can't do that with two feet of snow on the ground. I really like Devil's Hopyard.
– *Abby Georgiades*

Mara Dresner photos

Gardening! Just getting outside and getting in the dirt. It's the year of stepping outside the comfort zone. Never mind what you did last year. I'm going to try fruit trees and berry bushes.
– *Tracey Moore (pictured with Gi and Ivana)*

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Student of the month

Courtesy photo

Stephanie Koppy, a fifth-grader at Hopewell School, lives by the attributes that have made her our student of the month.

"She exemplifies caring, respect and responsibility in everything she does," said Kinga Decsy, her classroom teacher. "She has a great sense of humor and is never without a smile on her face. She is quick to help anyone in need, be it a teacher or another student and shows incredible kindness and compassion towards students with special needs. She jumps at the chance to work with other students, who may be struggling or need a little extra help and she does this without being asked."

She said Steff, as she is known, is serving on the student council for a second year and was elected vice president because of the leadership and responsibility she has shown.

Steff also participates in several other activities at Hopewell, as well as soccer, lacrosse and Girl Scouts outside of school. She also serves as the water girl for the Glastonbury High School varsity football team.

Staff members at the school praised her as a leader, a friend and a student, and for her confidence, maturity and kindness and the way she helps other students.

"I know Stephanie has always stood out as a leader and good

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friend, said Hopewell Principal Kathleen Murphy. "But this year, I have seen her in action a number of times as being a good friend and a contributing member of the Hopewell School Community. She has a special hug or hello to a favorite kindergarten student or a high five for a fourth grader walking down the hall. She is especially thoughtful and kind toward special needs students and goes out of her way to greet them, ask for their opinion, and include them in school activities. You will always find her at student council events selling water, using the intercom to talk up a student council event, or coming up with fresh ideas. She is a special young lady and I am proud to have her as a Hopewell School student."

Michelle T. Autorino, Hopewell's administrative secretary, described Steff as confident, positive and mature. "I believe that she will achieve anything that she desires in the future," she said.

Jason LaMay, the schools physical education teacher, praised Steff for her physical skills and her effort. "However, what makes Stephanie an even better kid is how she has treated her peers for six consecutive years," he added. "Stephanie goes out of her way to make others the best they can be. She often helps her classmates before the teacher can even notice that they need help. She sets great examples with her friendly, caring, enthusiastic and supportive personality. In short, Stephanie has a rare skill of making others better just by being herself. She is a true delight to be able to teach each week!"

Hopewell music teacher Stacey Tinker called Steff a natural leader. "Her peers are eager to work with her and follow her lead. She leads by example with her actions of kindness, caring, and hard work," she said. "Stephanie is a joyful person and finds joy in all activities and tasks she is asked to complete. When I see her in the hallway, she is always greeting me with a big smile and a wave. Stephanie works tirelessly for others and has an internal drive to help all students and staff with any project or need."

Nancy Collins, the school's office paraprofessional, described Steff as "a very wise, funny, kind and dependable young lady," adding that she is trustworthy and reliable and a good-humored student and friend who supports others in and out of the classroom. "She is always quick on her feet, with sensible reactions in all circumstances I've seen her in," she said. "She is the kind of daughter every mother wishes for."

And Danielle Galligan, the school's library media specialist, had this to say: "Steff Koppy is an all-around great student who puts forth her best effort during the school day. She takes the time to use her manners and always says thank you. She is humble and gracious, and is the first person to volunteer her time to help others. She epitomizes good citizenship and I feel honored to work with a student who always puts others needs before her own." GL

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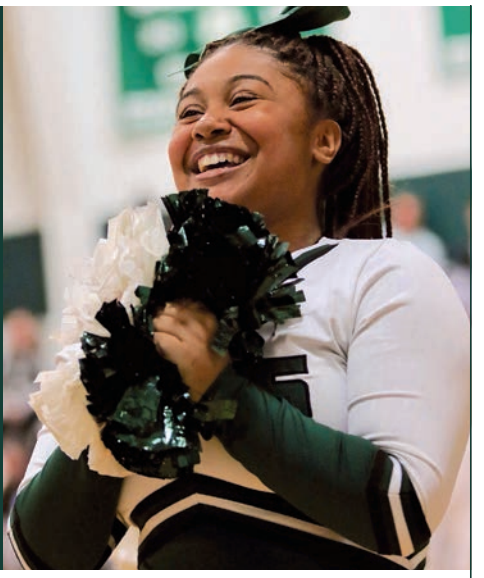

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NORTHWEST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

John Molina has a passion for celebrating and chronicling the days when women's professional basketball teams barnstormed the country. He possesses a wide variety of artifacts and collectibles from those days.

Photo by Mark Jahne

Book reaps instant honors

John Molina chronicles the early days of women's basketball

by Mark Jahne
Staff Writer

Before Geno Auriemma and Pat Summit, before Rebecca Lobo and Maya Moore, before it became an Olympic sport, there was women's basketball. It's a history many people don't know much about.

John Molina is working hard to change that. The Glastonbury native, now a Rocky Hill resident, has a true love for the game and its players and recently published a book entitled "Barnstorming America: Stories from the Pioneers of Women's Basketball."

It has already been named book of the year by the New England Basketball Hall of Fame. The forward is written by Donna Orender, former president of the WNBA.

Molina is a 2007 inductee of the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and a 2013 inductee of the New England Basketball Hall of Fame.

"There's never been a book done on barnstorming," he said.

Chris Voelz, executive director of the Collegiate Women's Sports Awards – The Honda Cup, praised the book as a combination of the

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John Molina stands with former University of Connecticut star and current Tufts University head coach Carla Berube, to his immediate left, and some of her players.

popular women's baseball movie "A League of Their Own" mixed in with a bit of "Forrest Gump" to chronicle both that time in U.S. history as well as the early days of women's basketball.

The book jacket also contains praise from John Doleva, president and CEO of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass.

"For the first time in history, the stories of basketball's First Ladies comes to life in John Molina's 'Barnstorming America.' Through their own words, tales of past glories fit neatly into the broader context of a bygone era," he wrote.

"Those basketball barnstormers paved the way for today's modern game and it is high time we hear their stories and celebrate their victories," he added.

It was only a few years since women had earned the right to vote when the first teams were formed in the 1930s. Other societal changes like workplace equality and protection from sexual harassment were decades away from adoption. So they had plenty to prove.

Molina spoke of a 1901 Spaulding rule book he found written specifically for women's basketball, which started as a partial-court game before eventually expanding to full length. Within that book is the editorial comment that declared the writers did not believe women could behave in an unselfish manner when it came to team play and sharing the ball.

Teams with colorful names such as the All American Red Heads, Texas Cowgirls, Ozark Hill Billies and Arkansas Travelers used to crisscross the country playing a highly skilled and entertaining brand of basketball. They were professionals and moved from one town to the next, competing against teams made up exclusively of men and most often defeating them.

"The women only played against men and they would win," Molina said.

That caused problems on occasion because sexist attitudes were prevalent in some locales and the hometown crowd didn't like to see their men beaten by a bunch of females. Sometimes the police had to provide protection as they left the arena, he said.

Their appearances were highly appealing and often drew an entire town to the local arena or gym, he added. To help draw a crowd, the women would put on a halftime show of dribbling, passing, shooting and other skills similar to the more famous Harlem Globetrotters.

But Molina is adamant that to label them as simply the female version of the Globetrotters would do a huge disservice to their place in American sports history.

Unlike the Globetrotters, who had a specific

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traveling opponent that was expected to lose most of the games, these teams of women faced different opponents every evening. They had to earn every victory against determined opponents.

That's why he decided to take the passion he already had for collecting as much information and paraphernalia as he could and wrote his book. The South Glastonbury native first learned of this form of basketball as a child when he discovered his grandmother was a former player.

Bernice Gondek Molina played for the J.B. Williams Soap Factory team in Glastonbury in the 1930s. The appeal of the women's game then, as it remains today, is based upon teamwork and sharing the ball for the greater good.

"It was everything the men's game isn't. It isn't selfish," he said.

Molina tried to do online research into this little-known piece of Americana starting in 1995 but found little information online. That only fueled his desire to try harder.

"That's when I developed the passion," he said. "I want to educate. There really is a rich history."

He's not an archivist or historian by profession. He works as a system analyst for the state government.

"This is my 3:30 in the morning job," he said with a smile.

He has collected countless items and collectibles related to women's barnstorming basketball. Many were donated to museums, including the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

The All American Red Heads were so called because every member of the team had red hair, either natural or dyed. Created in 1936 and originally owned and coached by C.M. "Ole" Olson, they rose to greater prominence under their second owner and coach, Orwell Moore.

"These women were playing eight games a week. They played double-headers on Sunday."

– John Molina

Moore, who lived in Arkansas, owned the team from 1955 to 1986. They traveled in a stretch Pontiac station wagon. He was trashing his archives when Molina contacted him and asked for the remaining items.

"Orwell Moore was burning his stuff, he was throwing his stuff out. No one cared," he said.

Moore sent him copious items including two boxes of old films of the Red Heads in action. Molina nominated them for special recognition and the team was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012. He gave the eulogy at Moore's funeral.

"At one point, I had 20,000 artifacts," Molina said. "The more I heard their stories, the more I started piecing them together. These teams offered women a chance to play basketball when there were no other real opportunities."

There were no teams for girls in high school or college back from the 1930s to the 1960s so this was the only opportunity for female players to enjoy the game and showcase their skills.

The irony is that the adoption of federal Title IX legislation in 1972, which required high schools, colleges and universities to provide equal sports options for female students, was a major factor in the end of these barnstorming teams a decade later.

"Title IX was probably the final nail in the coffin for them," Molina said.

The youngest of these barnstorming women are now in their 50s and many are much older. He said they were, for the most part, not aware of teams other than their own and are just now making connections and creating friendships over their common history.

Some of those teams from the 1940s and 1950s were all white. Others were integrated and some,

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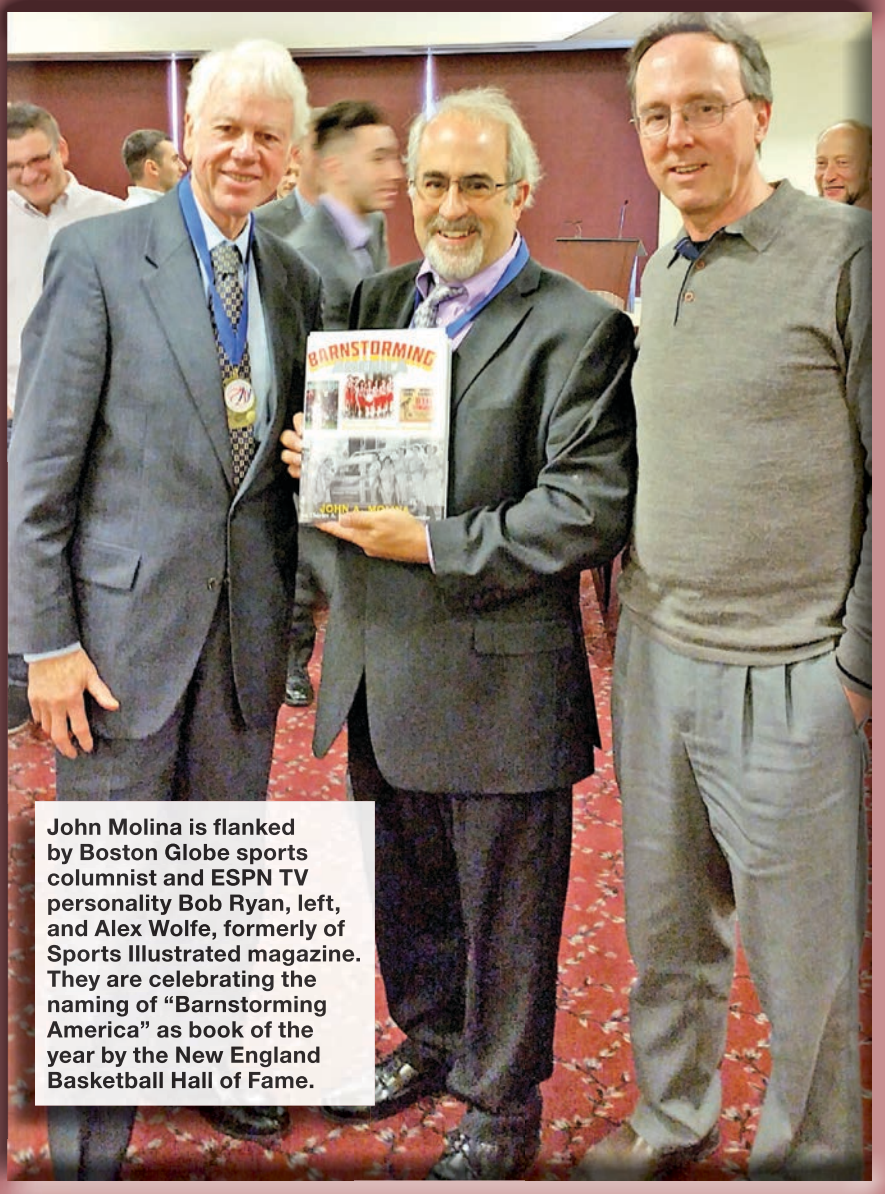

John Molina is flanked by Boston Globe sports columnist and ESPN TV personality Bob Ryan, left, and Alex Wolfe, formerly of Sports Illustrated magazine. They are celebrating the naming of "Barnstorming America" as book of the year by the New England Basketball Hall of Fame.

like the Harlem Chicks, were all black, he added.

Molina said the Red Heads and other teams played 200 games a year and recorded at least a 70 percent win rate over their male opponents. To make money, they had to travel and perform constantly.

"These women were playing eight games a week. They played double-headers on Sunday," he said.

He helped to organize a reunion game in 2010 in which the Red Heads competed against the alumni of the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers.

The growth in popularity of women's collegiate basketball has enabled him to attend several NCAA regional and Final Four tournaments. He plans to attend this year's Final Four in Dallas for a book signing with former barnstormers.

"I've already got 30 players from seven different teams to attend," he said.

He knows of one former player who grew up in and still resides in Connecticut. Gail Marks of Willimantic lived in Enfield during her playing days.

Molina enjoys watching the University of Connecticut women's team play and is impressed with its record 90-game winning streak compiled over four seasons. But were the Red Heads better?

"The Red Heads won 96 games in a row – in 96 days," he said.

All of them against men.

"Barnstorming America: Stories from the Pioneers of Women's Basketball" is a hardcover volume priced at $34.95 and available on Amazon.com and through Acclaim Press in Missouri.

Molina initially planned for-300numbered and signed editions of his book,but there was so much interest and so many pre-orders that the number was increased to500. Those are already gone.

"Initial sales have been way beyond anything I could have imagined," he said.

He is willing to work with nonprofit organizations to help them raise funds by holding book sales and signings at a discounted rate. **GL**

To learn more, visit barnstormingamerica.net or acclaimpress.com. John Molina can be contacted at womensbasketball@aol.com.

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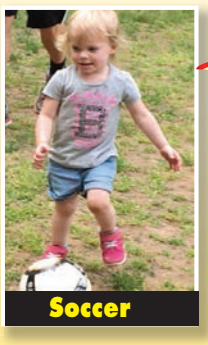
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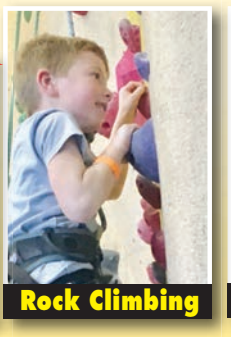
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Events spotlight

Ann Nyberg remembers Katharine Hepburn

April 2, 2 p.m.
Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St.
860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com

Author and television news anchor Ann Nyberg will talk about her new book, Remembering Katharine Hepburn at this free event. Nyberg, the longest serving full-time anchor/reporter in the state's television history, is a founding member of the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center, also known as The Kate, in Old Saybrook and an expert on Hepburn's life and career. Nyberg will be available to sign books, which will be available for $18. Seating is limited, so reservations are required by visiting wtmlib.info or calling 860-652-7720.

Colonial Cooking and playtime for children

April 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St.
860-633-6890 or hsgct.org

Children age 8 to 14 will prepare and enjoy a simple meal, cooking over the fire of one of the largest period fireplaces in the state using replicas of early American tools and utensils and following an 18th century recipe for macaroni and cheese brought back from Paris by Thomas Jefferson and introduced in the White House in 1802. After their meal, the children will play colonial games. $20. Reservations are required by calling 860-633-6890 or emailing HSGlastonbury@sbcglobal.net.

Earth Day

April 22, 10 a.m. to noon
Connecticut Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St.
860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org/center-at-glastonbury

The local Audubon Center's Earth Day observance has a new format this year. The center will sponsor a citizen science workshop called "Earth Day Action: Creek Critters and the Connecticut River." Participants will learn to use the Creek Critters phone app to collect and identify freshwater invertebrates and will work small teams to collect critters before gently returning them in the wetlands of Earle Park and the nearby Connecticut River. After returning to the center participants will share their findings, have a snack and learn how they can continue to monitor and take care of freshwater wetlands throughout the year. Participants should wear shoes they don't mind getting wet. The cost is $5 for members and $8 for non-members. Reservations are required by emailing kneville@ctaudubon.org or calling 860-633-8402.

A Step Back in Time

April 23, 1 to 4 p.m.
Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St.
860-633-6890 or hsgct@aol.com

The Historical Society of Glastonbury is providing another opportunity to step back in time and experience colonial living.
The colonial men, women and children of "Glassenbury," as the town was known, spent most of their days working. Participants will be able to watch costumed docents demonstrate daily chores of food preparation, cooking over the hearth, and weaving on our 300-year-old loom. Various exhibitors will be hard at work sewing, quilting, embroidering, cross stitching, and more, and participants can bring their own colonial hobby and work on it alongside the exhibitors. Children are welcome to take part as well and will be able to try carding wool, use the cricket loom, make their own colonial choker and participate in crafts. They will also be able to watch a sheep being sheared. Visitors are invited to make the experience more realistic and add to the fun by dressing in period appropriate costumes. There is a charge of $5 per person.

Words from the Wild

April 29, 2 to 4 p.m.
Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St.
poet.laureate@glastonbury-ct.gov

This event, which will celebrate Poetry Month, spring and the natural world, will feature David Leff, the New England Trail Poet-in-Residence, and Wait For It, a local Gospel/jazz/folk quartet. It will include a tribute to the legacy of Hugh Ogden, a renowned poet and former Glastonbury resident. Leff, a former deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the author of five non-fiction books, three volumes of poetry and a novel in verse, will take his audience hiking in New England through the words of his poetry in a series of haibun, work that combines haiku and prose. The event is presented by the Glastonbury Land Heritage Coalition and Glastonbury Poet Laureate Alexandrina Sergio. Refreshments will be served and Leff's books will be available for purchase and signing.

Fusing cuisines

Mexipho combines Mexican and Vietnamese flavors

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

It's not uncommon to find a restaurant offering "fusion cuisine," but not many combine the traditional flavors of Mexico and Vietnam.

Mexipho, a new restaurant on Main Street near Bertucci's, does just that.

It's a dream come true for Tony Melendez and Manny Rubio, both of whom have years of experience in the business and are of Mexican-American heritage.

Melendez, who has been in the restaurant business since his youth, moved to Connecticut from Texas to start a Plaza Azteca outlet in Manchester. Rubio, the restaurant's marketing director, worked for many years in the industry in Atlanta. They became friends and often met at a Vietnamese restaurant in East Hartford for breakfast.

"Pho [pronounced "fuh"] is the traditional Vietnamese breakfast," Melendez said. "One day Tony and I were celebrating something, and the next day we work up feeling sore and went to the Vietnamese place for food. We were eating and I said, 'Oh, man. I'm missing my Mexican tacos with a cold beer.' An idea was formed."

"We looked at each other and said 'Let's make this happen,'" Rubio said.

They realized some ingredients, such as cilantro and jalapeños, were common in both cuisines. "Then we started noticing a similarity in condiments, like hot sauce," he continued. "We were kind of seeing that the combination is possible."

They played with the concept and developed dishes, and both liked what they ended up with.

Next, they came up with a long list of possible names. They were brainstorming one day when Rubio's wife suggested MexiPho.

"We were in love with the name and concept from Day One," Rubio said. They trademarked the name, the concept and the logo, which features a bowl, presumably filled with pho on top, a handlebar moustache in the middle, and a pair of chopsticks at the bottom. The moustache figures prominently in the restaurant's décor as well.

So they had a concept, a name, a logo and some potential menu items, but they didn't have a location.

"We knew it would happen at the right moment," Rubio said. "This is our dream come true."

"It was meant to be," Melendez added. "We were on our way to Rooftop 120 and we were stopped at the light on Main Street and saw that this space was available."

The site, formerly a toy store, needed major renovations, so the two men designed exactly what they wanted and opened the restaurant in December.

The menu has five main dishes: traditional Vietnamese recipe pho; a phorrito, a burrito filled with pho ingredients; tacos made with a soft or crispy tortilla; a salad bowl; and alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, the traditional Mexican doughnut-like dessert known as churros, and sides

such as fresh guacamole, chips and salsa.

The pho comes with steak, chicken, shrimp, tofu or a vegan filling, with a choice of beef, chicken or vegan broth, and includes cilantro, basil, onion, beansprouts, scallions and lime.

The phorrito is served with a choice of steak, chicken, pork pastor or vegan protein and comes with traditional pho ingredients as well as cheese and optional guacamole for an additional charge.

Tacos can be custom made with ingredients such as steak, chicken, pork pastor and grilled vegetables with cilantro, onion, corn, cheese, lettuce, hot sauce and optional guacamole.

Salad bowls, made with fresh, local ingredients and homemade dressing, include the same protein choices with lettuce, black beans, cilantro, onion, corn, mango pico de gallo, cheese and optional guacamole.

"Everything is cooked here," Melendez said. "We're constantly bringing food to the line, and people are having fun. We're very proud to be bringing the best ingredients and we want people to fall in love with our food."

Melendez and Rubio are working with community groups, including the Glastonbury High School crew team, on fundraisers and other events.

In the short time it's been open, Mexipho has developed a dedicated following that includes local police Officer Sergey Sharov and town resident MaryJo Ferraro.

"I have been coming to MexiPho before they even officially opened for business," Sharov said. "One night I was passing by in my cruiser and noticed a new sign go up at Griswold Mall. Come to find out, Darwin and Manny were setting up for a dry run. They welcomed me in like they have known me for years. I tried their soups and deserts and was pleasantly surprised with how the cuisines from two opposite parts of the globe complemented each other so organically. I was also amazed by their attention to detail, which initially lead me to believe this store was a franchise. From the layout to promotional material, not one detail was missed."

He became a fan right away. "I was hooked from day one. I can live on pho, the ultimate comfort food. I loved the idea of using rice noodles instead of plain rice in tacos and salads. This unique concept has a successful franchise potential. Every time I go to MexiPho, the lounge music playing in the background and the smell of fresh limes bring back memories of my honeymoon at Riviera Maya. The ingredients are always fresh and the smiles on the faces of staff members are always genuine. It feels like MexiPho is as proud of their product as they are to be a part of this community. MexiPho provides a vibrant addition to the diverse restaurant scene in this great town."

Ferraro agreed. "I really am a fan," she said. "I love a number of things. It's my daughter's first job, and I love the way they treat her. Our son is on the crew team and they've been so generous, offering two night for Pulling for Pulse, a four-person boat, and to raise money to buy automatic external defibrillators."

She said her son put together the fundraiser with Rubio and Melendez. "They've been very generous. They just started a new business, and already they're running fundraisers for the community."

She also loves eating there. "The food is great," she said. "It's healthy, fresh, and delicious, and just a little different. I'm enjoying it and becoming a little more adventuresome. My husband and I crave it now. It's a great addition to the restaurants in town."

CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce President Mary Ellen Dombrowski called Melendez and Rubio "very talented entrepreneurs with restaurant experience that expect their concept to catch on and grow." She added, "They have been very well received in Glastonbury."

The two men are confident the concept will catch on and spread. "We want to be in big cities, college campuses, and shopping malls," Melendez said. "This is the first one," Melendez said.

"The first of many," Rubio added with a smile. **GL**

MexiPho is at 2872 Main Street, 860-633-2198. To learn more, visit mexipho.com.

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Brian Ambrose

Kids on their mid-winter break enjoyed Mr. Fish demonstrating the science of magic at Smith Middle School.

Fun with Mr. Fish

1. Cousins Mason and Benjamin Gambacota meet Mister Fish. **2.** Connor Finnerty and RJ Rosa keeps it going on their chins. **3.** RJ Rosa balances a feather. **3.** Avery Frick and Mister Fish work on good balance. **4.** Mckenzie Connell tries her hand at balancing. **5.** Mister Fish looks on as his balancing team goes to work. **6.** Seamus Harrington tries his hand at catching a boomerang. **7.** Catherine Gionfriddo tries to blow up a balloon for Mister Fish. **8.** Lilian Winston puts a needle through the balloon without popping it. **9.** Mister Fish balances all six plates. **10.** Cousins Mason and Benjamin Gambacota meet Mister Fish. **11.** Terrel Lee poses for a picture with Mister Fish. **12.** Max Golino hands plates to Mister Fish to balance on sticks. **13.** Paul Serigse hanging out with Mister Fish after the big show.

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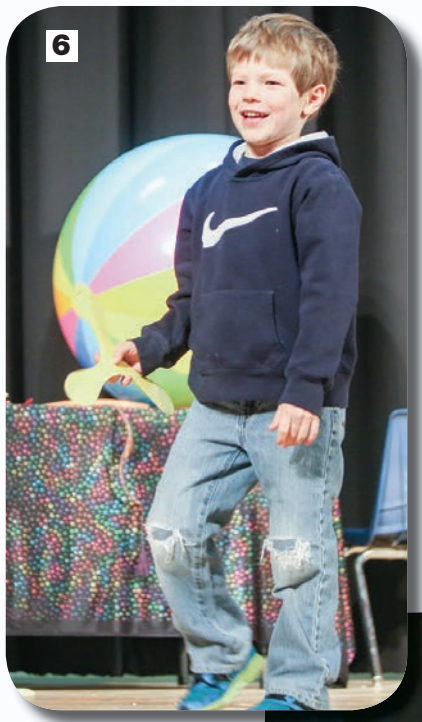
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Keep 'em busy

A physician invented this Busy Bee Baby Buzz'r, a teether toy from IQ Baby, distributed by Small World Toys. Designed for babies older than three months, the bee has soft, PVC-free wings to chew on. The toy vibrates and features lights with an automatic shut-off. There's a mirrored back and it plays 12 classical melodies by Bach, Beethoven and other composers. It sells for $20.99 and you'll find it at Pinwheels Toys & Games, 41 Hebron Avenue, 860-430-2954, pinwheelstoys.com.

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People Notes

Tod and Jo Ann Umbach of South Glastonbury have announced the engagement of their daughter, **Alaina Umbach** to **Alex Clausen,** son of Jack and Sandy Granchelli Clausen of Coventry. She is a 2009 graduate of Glastonbury High School and he is a 2009 graduate of Coventry High School. Both are 2013 graduates of Bryant University with degrees in Accounting and are certified public accountants. A June 2018 wedding is planned.

Jake Kulak and his band, Lowdown, are in the running for an award as best new act from the New England Music Awards. He is a student at Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford.

Suzie Hoyt, coach of the Glastonbury High School boys and girls swim teams, has received the Double-Goal Coach Award given by the Positive Coaching Alliance. She is one of 50 recipients of the award, which recognizes coaches who strive to win while also teaching live lessons through sports.

Catherine Egan, a health education teacher at Glastonbury High School for the past 10 years, has been selected by SHAPE America, the Society of Health and Physical Educators, as the teacher of the year for its eastern district, which covers 11 states.

Kelsey Hawkins made the dean's list at Loyola University Maryland.

Kelsey Anderson was among several Stonehill College students who sang for Pope Francis as part of the college's chapel choir.

Ashley Flock made the dean's list at the College of Saint Rose in Albany.

The following students made the president's list at Goodwin College by earning a 4.0 grade point average: **Ashlee Couto, Tereza Goring, Nancy Morgan** and **Rosemarie Taylor.**

Meghan Dube, Breana Soto and **Kaylee Stebbins** made the dean's list at Hofstra University.

The following students made the dean's list at Goodwin College: **Ashlee Couto, Allison Cunningham, Kara Famolari, Tereza Goring, Chloe Hansen, Nancy Morgan, Paige Tine, Daniel Rearick** and **Rosemarie Taylor.**

Emma Newquist and **Megan Sadlon** made the provost's list with a 4.0 grade point average at Hofstra University.

The following students made the dean's list at Goodwin College: **Ashlee Couto, Allison Cunningham, Kara Famolari, Tereza Goring, Chloe Hansen;, Nancy Morgan, Paige Tine, Daniel Rearick** and **Rosemarie Taylor.**

Jeffrey Joyce, Hayden Rossi and **Shivani Trivedi** made the dean's list at Seton Hall University.

Annie Renaud made the dean's list at SUNY Geneseo.

Dan Joseph Hecker made the dean's list at Clarkson University.

Elizabeth A. Szumski was named a presidential scholar at Clarkson University.

Katharine Yacovone made the dean's list at Marist College.

Emma Habzda made the dean's list at Kent State University.

Kwasi Amofa and **Amanda Percival** made the dean's list at Western New England University.

Albert A. Hansrisuk and **Elena L. Mangan** made the president's list at Western New England University.

The following students made the dean's list at the University of New Hampshire: **Megan Scanlon,** highest honors; **Brendan Stephan, Sarah Tobias, Michael Wulftange** and **Emily Cunningham**, high honors, and **Liam McNamara, Jack Sullivan** and **Shea O'Callaghan,** honors. GL

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Sanam Solati and Tom Yurczyk are spouses and partners in EXIT Realty Black Rock, which opened last summer on Naubuc Avenue.

Couple opens real estate office

Bring varied experience to new franchise

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

People name their companies in a variety of ways, incorporating the owners' names or creating acronyms describing what the company does. Husband-and-wife team Sanam Solati and Tom Yurczyk went a different way. They picked their real estate company's name from an O.A.R. song, "Black Rock."

The two, who were married in December 2012, came from different business backgrounds.

"All I've ever done is real estate," said Solati, who grew up in Woodbridge. "When I was in high school, when we would drive by open houses, I would always beg my mom to stop. My parents allowed me to work in the summers and I was a bank teller at Branford Savings Bank. I would always talk to anyone who would walk in. There was a gentleman who would have big checks all the time. I asked him, 'What do you do?' He said, 'I'm a realtor. My assistant just left; would you be interested? I'll pay for you to get licensed.'"

Solati began working in the field after school and on weekends

"He needed me more and more, and my parents didn't want me working so much," said Solati, who left that job to focus on her studies.

She went to UCONN and also got her license, working for William Raveis in Guilford.

"I didn't make a single sale, but I made lots of friends. It was an experience," she recalled.

Next, she worked for Toll Brothers construction before starting Black Rock Homes.

Yurczyk, who's from Cheshire, attended Quinnipiac University for marketing, working in outside sales for W.B. Mason in Westchester, NY, because there were no Connecticut territories available when he was looking.

"I didn't really enjoy that job. It was business to business and not very personal. I had a friend working at Pulte Homes. They're a national builder and they had an opening. That's kind of how I fell into real estate; it found me," he said.

He worked for Pulte in Haddam, Cheshire and Newington.

"After that, Pulte was pulling out of Connecticut. The only place to go was out of state," he said.

He didn't want to do that, so he changed his career focus yet again.

While the pair originally managed their real estate business from their home, last year they opened an office on Naubuc Avenue.

"It was a holiday and we were driving by. It was vacant," Solati said. "We called the listing agent. When we walked right in, we thought, 'We can picture everything the way it needs to be.' We were sold the minute we walked in. We put in an offer that day. It was still residential at that time. We bought this in 2009. We just finished going commercial this past summer. It was a process."

In addition to getting the office set up, the couple had a lot going on in their personal lives, including purchasing and remodeling a home, and having Cooper, now 2 1/2, who has since been joined by baby sister Arianna, who's almost a year old.

"We love Glastonbury. We love our location. There are summer concerts right across the street; so many people run by here. I feel like this area is so alive. And we have the best neighbor, Lynn Damon. There are so many restaurants, that's the dangerous thing," Solati said.

While they had planned to remain an independent real estate firm, last year they became EXIT Realty Black Rock.

"Being a boutique [agency] and being small, there's not a lot of outside support. We were doing fine, but our goals were to grow bigger than we are today. We have two little ones and we wanted to be able to leave them with something. When you're small and doing it yourself, you're competing with a lot of big brokers. It's really a challenge to grow. A lot of companies had knocked on our doors and offered different proposals. We came close to connecting and literally at the eleventh hour, decided not to," Solati explained. "The regional owner of EXIT in Connecticut contacted us. I had never heard of EXIT and actually didn't care for the name. He came here, sat down and shared the EXIT story. We looked at each other and we were both sold. We love everything EXIT is about."

That includes the training,

branding, technology, culture and compensation method. As part of their training as a new EXIT franchise, the couple went to Canada for a week of in-depth training. Despite being married, they ended up learning something about each other's work styles.

"We have very different personalities. In choosing to work with each other, we recognize that and respect each other's strengths. We realize where we have shortcomings and kind of balance each other out. It's important to choose different lanes. Up until we realized that, it was a little bit of a challenge," Solati said.

A major portion of one day's training was spent on personalities, where the couple was sent to different rooms because of their personality types.

"After that, everything has been easy. It's just understanding each other," Solati noted. "We appreciate the other one's challenges when we have them and he calms me down. It has a lot to do with a different perspective."

While they're both Realtors, helping clients buy and sell, Solati takes on more of a managerial role, including supervising the other agents, while Yurczyk works on technology.

"It's a nice balance. Sanam's, 'Let's just do it,' and I'm a little more conservative and it actually works out well," Yurczyk said.

He's also been able to tap into his creative side, such as using video to help showcase houses. Instead of simple slideshows, he creates a story. One video for a home in Kensington showed their son receiving a package in the mail, a teddy bear. It then depicts him racing through each room of the house – with close-up shots of features such as countertops – with the bear, looking for someone or something. The video ends on the patio outside, where he gives the bear to his baby sister with a hug.

"He's very forward thinking and super creative," Solati said, noting that her husband was featured in Realtor magazine for his work. "We try to stay ahead of the curves."

Their efforts have been paying off. Before joining EXIT, they had two part-time agents; now their staff includes five full-time and three part-time agents.

"EXIT is always evolving. Their tag line is 'Real Estate Reinvented.' They're only 20 years young, which is a young franchise. They came out when the internet was out and they're constantly trying to evolve, to stay ahead of technology," Yurczyk said.

"EXIT Realty is a progressive, family-owned agency that takes a non-traditional approach to real estate. We are delighted to have them in the community and our chamber," Mary Ellen Dombrowski, president, Connecticut River Valley Chamber of Commerce, said.

Jason Clay, an actuarial director at AIX Group in Windsor, used Solati and Yurczyk to purchase his Glastonbury home in 2009.

"Since that time we've consulted with them on ideas to make the house more appealing to potential buyers as we are considering a move at some point in the near future. They are both very timely in their responses to our questions and were more than happy to pay us a visit and tour the house to check out all of the updates we've made and what steps we should take next. As a buyer I enjoyed working with Tom and Sanam because they listened to what I was looking for and found several houses that were a good fit in a short amount of time. They set up appointments rather quickly and helped a first-time home buyer understand the nuances of each house and neighborhood. Since I was single at the time I did not fully understand the importance of school systems, etc.," Clay said.

As they look toward completing their first year in town, Solati acknowledged she's changed her mind about the "EXIT" name.

"It's a name everyone is familiar with; everyone can pronounce it. It's above every corporation's door. It actually means safe passage; it's about helping guide them through a safe passage. Our job is to guide them safely," Solati said. "On so many different levels, this is genius." **GL**

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Roger Williams hits the right notes

Local man is a virtuoso on the Dobro

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Some people aren't sure what they want to do until they're adults. Roger Williams knew when he was a young child.

"I grew up listening to and having a love affair with country music in the '50s," he said. "My mother was always singing and playing the guitar. I used to sing harmony with her. I had a natural ability until I hit puberty and lost my tenor voice."

He wore glasses as a young child, was terrible at sports, somewhat introverted and often picked on by other kids. "Music was my best friend," he said.

By his teens, young Roger was also playing a resophonic guitar, an instrument commonly known as a Dobro.

Although Williams' father played the Dobro as well, he said he was influenced in music more by his mother, with whom he lived in Massachusetts after his parents divorced.

"I always thought I'd be a singer, but the Dobro began to intrigue me," he said. "When it was spoken about in the house it had a mystique."

He said the instrument, often used in country and bluegrass music, has been around for about 100 years. It got its name from its inventors, the Dobyera Brothers and coincidentally means "goodness" in their native Slovak language.

He looked for a Dobro at two music stores in his hometown of Lawrence, where both owners had no idea what he was talking about, and then found a store in Keene, New Hampshire, about 50 miles away. When he and his mother drove there, he discovered that a new Dobro was far too expensive and ended up buying what he described as "an old worn-out guitar

Roger Williams plays a Dobro horizontally, not like a typical guitar.

Brian Ambrose photo

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with a warped top" for $32.50.

"The idea was that I could learn to play that and in time get enough money for a real Dobro," he said.

His father had moved back to the area and was playing the Dobro at the Hillbilly Ranch, a country music night club in Boston. The club, which had become famous, had two bands, a country band that included his father, and a bluegrass band featuring the Lilly Brothers and Don Stover, both of whom were legendary in bluegrass music at the time. The band provided Williams with his first chance to perform professionally.

"Within six months of learning to play I got to sit in with the Lilly Brothers," he said. "They were playing six or seven nights a week. They were inspiring. At first I had that used guitar, and then I had my own Dobro."

While he enjoyed the music, he thought the only places he could perform were bars and he didn't want to do that. "It put a damper on my playing," he said. It didn't help that his new wife didn't enjoy being married to a musician. He stopped performing for about five years.

By 1975 he was ready to perform again and joined the White Oak Mountain Boys with Stover, the bluegrass legend he had met several years before in Boston.

"I still had a glamorized view of the music industry until our first trip to DC in a Chevy station wagon," Williams said. "Don hadn't made arrangements for a motel on the way down and we ended up in a motel's storage room and got maybe three hours of sleep. Then Sunday night, I had to work the next day and we drove back all night."

That experience aside, he was hooked. "Music was my passion, my only love," he said.

1980 was a significant year. He joined the White Mountain bluegrass band from New Hampshire, and his marriage ended.

Williams also became reacquainted with a woman he'd known in elementary school. She lived nearby and loved music. "I had a supportive partner and I was with that band for 14 years," he said. The group made several recordings and traveled throughout Europe and Canada as well as the U.S.

Larry J. Bilansky photo

Roger Williams has performed in many venues, including the Podunk Bluegrass Festival in East Hartford.

In 1994 he quit his full-time factory job and devoted himself full-time to music. The band traveled

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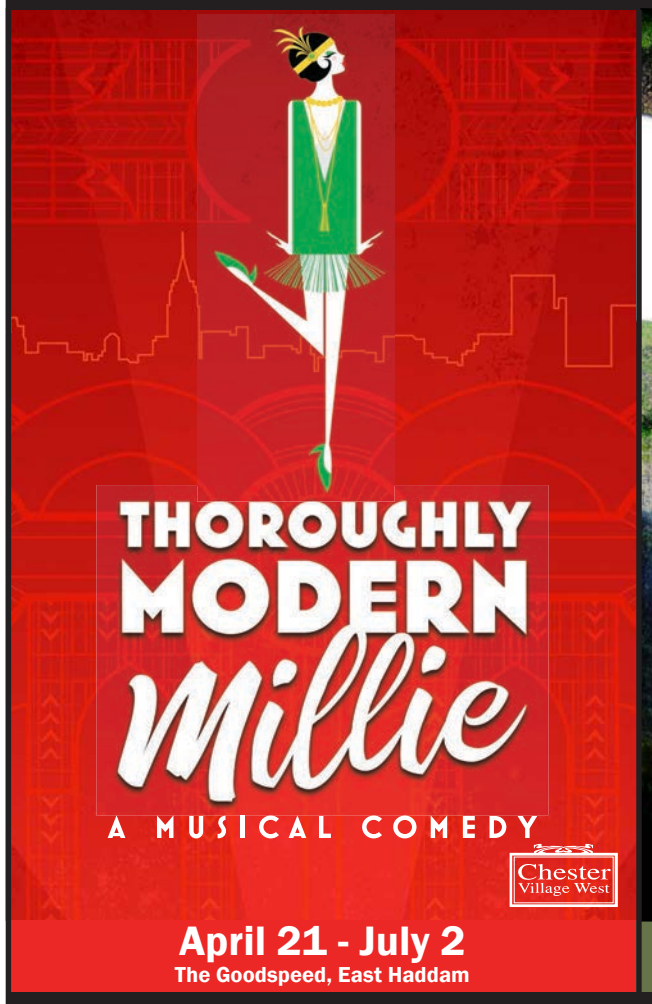

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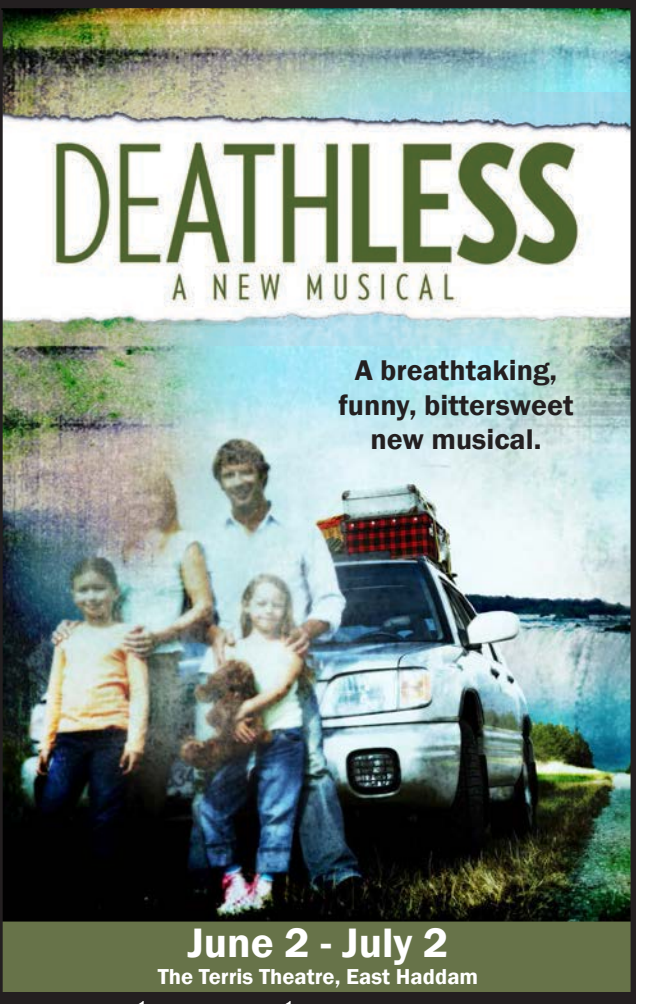

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throughout the country and earned several significant awards including the International Bluegrass Music Association's Album of the Year in 1995.

He started freelancing, playing for recording sessions and at bluegrass festivals, where he noticed a musician named Amy Gallatin. They clicked personally as well as professionally and have been partners for 12 years.

"In the early 2000s she saw me when we were playing at the same venue with different bands and asked me to sit in," he said. "At first I appreciated her talent. We both ended relationships around 2004 and I moved to Glastonbury in 2005. We ended up being an item."

He plays with Amy Gallatin & Stillwaters and as one of the "men-o-pause" in her mostly female group "The Hot Flashes." His son, J.D. Williams, a Manchester resident, plays the mandolin in both groups.

"He views musical talent as a gift to be shared with others, and something not to be taken for granted."

– Amy Gallatin

Williams and Gallatin have created a small recording studio in their home, where he is working on a solo project, while Gallatin is thinking about doing a Christmas album together with Williams and a few other musicians they've worked with over the years.

They've performed for many years at the CT Audubon Center on Main Street, where they entertained a standing-room-only crowd in February.

Judy Harper, the center's former director who booked them for their first concert there, called Williams "a most talented musician," adding, "He's also a nice guy. And he's a hard worker, which I see when he's setting up and disassembling concerts. He's mellow and a good partner for Amy."

Gallatin said she's impressed with the way his music reflects his spirituality.

"He views musical talent as a gift to be shared with others, and something not to be taken for granted," she said. "I think that belief infuses his playing and his personality. His life has not always been an easy one, and in his playing you can, somehow, hear every twist and turn and bump along the road."

In terms of their personal relationship, Gallatin, who acknowledged having a Type-A personality, said Williams is "a steadying presence, especially when the vicissitudes of the music biz get me down. He has kind of seen and done it all, you know? Certainly as a musical colleague and partner he has my back. I lucked out when out paths crossed, that's for sure." **GL**

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Artist motivated by joy and education

Left corporate job to pursue creative life

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

For parents who are a little tired of saying goodnight to the moon and the mittens and the kittens and the three little bears sitting on chairs, it's time to say "goodnight" to the Old Cider Mill, Cotton Hollow, Horton's Farm, the fountain by the boathouse and other town attractions in Barbara Hallman's "Goodnight Glastonbury."

"It's a kids' book, the 'Goodnight Moon' of Glastonbury. They're all Glastonbury pictures," Hallman said. The project was inspired by a similar one in Lincoln, Mass.

She enjoyed the process of producing the book.

"It was fun. It went through a couple of iterations," she said.

It's just one of many artistic projects for Hallman who grew up outside of Philadelphia. Although her mother used to teach art classes to the neighborhood children, she never thought she'd pursue a creative career.

Hallman discovered photography when she was in high school and served as photo editor for her yearbook.

She earned a degree in biology with a minor in math and computer science, and worked in the restaurant industry for many years, as well as working in healthcare and as a business consultant.

"I didn't have a clue where I wanted to go," said Hallman, who moved to Glastonbury in 2007. "I was still doing photography in the background. I was a business consultant for a dozen years. I loved that but I always thought there's something else. I'd ask, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' When I was ready to leave the corporate world, I loved what I did, but the whole atmosphere was dragging on me."

While she enjoyed the work of consulting and teaching, she wanted to do it in a different way.

"I did not want do to a 9 to 5 job. I wanted to do something more around the joy of photography. I left corporate America and delved into photography," she said.

She likes forming relationships with her clients.

"I'm not a wedding photographer, although I've shot four weddings. That's a lot of work and I didn't want that kind of pressure. That's a one-time event. I like to grow up with people, I'm still growing up. I'm kind of focused. I dove

Barbara Hallman is a photographer whose projects include"Goodnight Glastonbury" and working with local farmers.

Photo by Mara Dresner

myself into the portrait world. I went to conferences. I studied under people like Tony Sweet," she said. "Photography for me is I want 20 kids I grew up with. I want to pick up a special project because I never want it to be I'm so focused on getting clients that it's not joyful to me. That's a disservice to the client."

She took various seminars and classes. She knows it might not be the most lucrative path, and that's all right with her.

"I'm never going to make a million selling an image," she said. "I got into Sandy Puc. She had a very special mission. She is a wonderful portrait photographer out of Colorado. I just liked the way she approached it, her philosophy and the way she approached it. She understands the business; she

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'The Old Cider Mill' is one of photographer Barbara Hallman's favorite high dynamic range images.

Barbara Hallman uses teasles, a thorny plant that she clips from the side of the highway, to create little animals.

Barbara Hallman uses photographs such as this image, taken with an iPhone, to teach young artists that you do not need expensive equipment to be creative.

understands what her passion is.

"The other piece is giving back," Hallman continued. "She and her dear friend came up with an organization after her friend lost her baby and asked Sandy to take pictures because she knew her baby was not coming home."

Hallman trained with that organization, Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. Hospitals around the country offer the service to families whose babies die.

"We do a photo session. It's incredibly tasteful and very emotional. We do minor editing, softening. We take out some tubes, and they get these images for free. I've done a couple of sessions. It's gut-wrenching to do them," she said.

While she still supports the organization, her travelling schedule interfered with her ability to do the sessions.

She is an avid traveler and features photos from her travels on her website. Because she is selective with her photography projects, she will take on other work, such as a landscaping company, where she had a special niche with a focus on a select demographic.

"They're all little old ladies who can't it do for themselves. I'm glad I can go and help them. They get joy from their gardens and can stay in their homes," she said.

"She's hardworking, loyal, big-hearted, the kind of friend you don't find very often and you really cherish," said Sharyn MacLelland, who worked with her on the landscaping company. "We did all kind of design and installation work, and I found her to have a really good eye for color. She was meticulous in her work and willing to try new things."

MacLelland also has used Hallman's photographic services.

"She's creative and innovative. She's persistent. She hangs in there until she gets just what she's looking for," MacLelland said.

Hallman has an affinity for Glastonbury's farms and is connected with several, including The Old Cider Mill.

"I just love the history and what it is in our town. I'm one of those maniacs that does the fall festival for eight weeks every year with no days off. I just run around like an idiot," she said.

She especially enjoys the education aspect of the project.

"When kids come they have to learn something about the animals. They don't just get to pet the animals and run away back to the Internet," she said, adding, "I gross the kids out by letting the big cow lick my arm."

She also likes showing kids how they can take better photos, even with their phones.

"I like educating," she added.

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She works on a variety of video projects both for her own family and for others, including farms in the area, where she's had the opportunity to put her business background to use.

"I'm part of the farm community. I work with the Duffords, with Chris Bassette and her foundation. Farmers don't know consulting; they don't know business. They know farming really well. I put up a weird consulting mirror and look at farming in a different way," she said.

"She gives everything 100% of herself and it's personal: her work, her friendship, everything. She is a person who puts her heart and soul into everything, and it shows in all she does," Bassette said.

Hallman pursues whatever piques her interest. For a few years she made birdhouses after meeting an artisan at the Old Cider Mill.

"It was a weird group that does chainsaw work. I did learn how to do it and I loved the creativity. We decided to part ways over alcohol and drugs," she said.

She turns teasels, dried spiny roadside plants, into little creatures, such as hedgehogs, owls and mice.

Barbara Hallman loves photographing children, including these kids waiting for a ferry.

"It's a flowering plant on the sides of the highway. Very rarely do you see up here. In Pennsylvania near my mother's house, it's very prevalent. One time when I was down there, I clipped it and sprayed it in all different colors. I did holiday boxes, cemetery boxes rather than buy premade, I'd do custom. Then I started google searching other things you can do with it," she said. "I collected a lot of stuff in Pennsylvania. I have travel nips in a bag [in my car] and gloves. You can't pick them without gloves. They're very thorny."

She found some ornaments that volunteers had made while visiting the Los Angeles County Arboretum.

"Of course, I bought some to see if I can replicate them," she said. "I go to places like that, to different craft shows, to see what people are doing that are fun. If nothing else, they go on my tree. I try to find little projects that I can tinker with and play with. I guess it's me doing arts and crafts 50 years later. I like to see something in a store and do that at home, rather than buy something made in China."

Hallman said even with her disparate interests, two things motivate her.

"Joy and education is the thing that drives me in everything in life. That probably won't change. We go to the Jersey Shore every year, not the one on television. I just sit there and watch the waves and the little kids running. I'm watching the joy," she said.

She said it's a similar feeling when children come to The Old Cider Mill to watch the animals and she puts a chick in their hands.

"We don't appreciate that stuff," she said. "There's no time to stop and that's where I sit is in the stop." **GL**

Learn more at barbarahallman.com.

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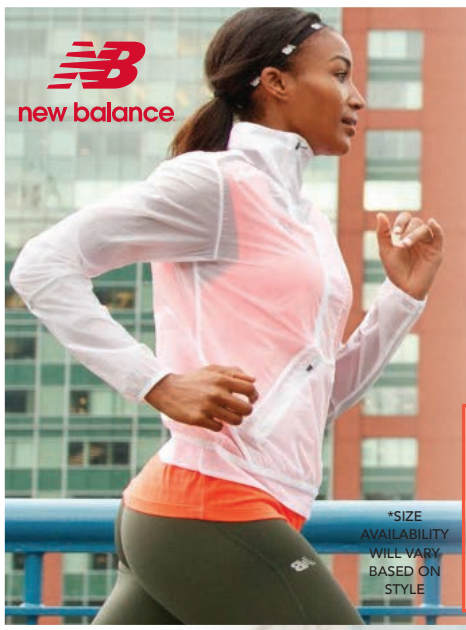

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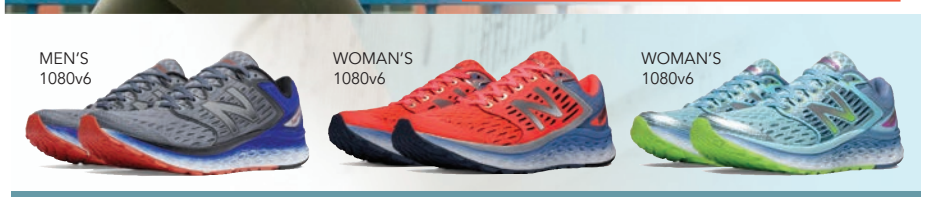

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

1 **Concert with Ian Ethan Case**, 7:30 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $15. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-633-4455, ext. 4923.

2 **Ann Nyberg remembers Katharine Hepburn,** 2 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Books available for purchase and signing. Limited seating, so reservations are required. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

3 **Over There? Over My Dead Body! lecture about World War I with Professor Hamish Lutris,** 6:30 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Limited seating, so reservations are required. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

4 **Town plan and zoning commission,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

5 **Book group discussion of Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town by Jon Krakauer,** 7 p.m., Welles Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. No registration necessary. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com

8 **Easter egg hunt for dogs,** 10 a.m. to noon, Riverfront Park, 300 Welles St. 860-652-7679 or recreation@glastonbury-ct.gov.

Genealogy group sponsored by the Welsh Society of Western New England, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants are asked to bring their Welsh family tree and a lunch dish to share. Reserve a spot by emailing WelshWNE@gmail.com. Directions will be forwarded at that time.

Lars the Little Polar Bear, 11 a.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $5. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-633-4455, ext. 4923.

9 **Fresh from the farm event,** 1 to 4 p.m., Killam-Bassette Farmstead, 14 Tryon St. Farm fresh samples, live music, wine tasting, hayrides, face painting and kids' activities. 860-833-0095 or kbfarmstead.com.

11 **Colonial cooking and playtime for children,** 10 a.m., Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St. $20. 860-633-6890 or hsgct.org.

12 **Double feature with Dawn of the Space Age and Astronaut,** 6 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $5. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-633-4455, ext. 4923.

18 **Town council,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7710 or glastonbury-ct.gov.

Keep Up with Your Grandkids session: protecting yourself from scams, 3 p.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. Limited seating, so reservations are required. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

22 **Youth fishing derby,** 8 to 10 a.m., Williams Park, 789 Neipsic Rd. 860-652-7679 or recreation@glastonbury-ct.gov.

Earth Day Action, 10 a.m. to noon, CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St. $5 members, $8 non-members. 860-633-8402 or ctaudubon.org.

23 **A Step Back in Time,** 1 to 4 p.m., Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St. $5. 860-633-6890 or hsgct@aol.com

24 **Board of education,** 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

25 **B.Y.O.C. (Bring Your Own Craft),** 6:30 to 8 p.m., Welles Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St., $, 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

26 **Credit Do's and Don'ts,** 6:30 p.m., Welles Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. Limited seating, so reservations are required. 860-652-7720 or wtmlib.com.

27 **We are Aliens,** 5:30 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $5. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-633-4455, ext. 4923.

To Space and Back, 7 p.m., Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School planetarium, 95 Oak St. Tickets available at www.glastonburyplanetarium.org for $5. For more information, email Planetarium@Glastonburyus.org or call 860-633-4455, ext. 4923.

29

Words from the Wild with poet David Leff and music by Wait for It, 2 p.m., Welles-Turner Memorial Library, 2407 Main St. No charge.

GL

New life for historic structure

Church will renovate Thomas Hale House

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Courtesy photo

Since it was built in the 18th century, the structure at 2169 Main Street has served as a tavern and the home of a prominent local family before falling into disrepair. Under the ownership of the First Church of Christ, its neighbor to the north, it's about to become a chapel and community gathering place.

The property was owned by Henry Smith, the first minister of Wethersfield, whose daughter inherited 180 acres when he died in 1648. The Hale family became involved when she married Samuel Hale, a veteran of the Pequot War, and he inherited it when she died. On his death, the property passed to his three sons, Samuel Jr., Benezer and Thomas, who was licensed to run a tavern on the site in 1714.

Hale, who is credited as being one of the town's founders, and one of the petitioners who sought separation from Wethersfield in 1690, died in 1723.

When Hale died, his sons, Thomas and Timothy, inherited the property, with Timothy inheriting 48 acres of land and the house, which was described in an inventory of historic American buildings as "solid, substantial, but plainly built" and "a good example of the Connecticut River Valley central chimney farmhouse."

Timothy Hale passed the land and dwelling to his son, Daniel in 1758, and the property remained in the Hale family until the 1920s, when it was sold along with eight acres of land. By 1962, the lot on which the house stood was .9 acres.

The house fell into disrepair over the years, and the property, including the house, was purchased in 2007 by the First Church of Christ, which wanted to expand its parking area.

Church members started thinking about possible uses for the building on the site. The planned Micah House and Chapel is the result.

"As First Church was considering the possibility of converting existing space in our current facili-

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Courtesy photo

ties to create a more intimate, worship and meeting space, a confluence of thinking resulted in the idea of the Thomas Hale home being carefully restored and expanded," said David Taylor, one of the pastors at First Church of Christ. "This 1714 home would be adapted for 21st-century use by our congregation and by the community as well. A win-win would be the preservation of the essential structure of this treasured house, along with adaptive use of old and new space to be a meetinghouse for members and for the community."

Taylor said the partially restored and expanded house will be a place where people can gather, either in two historically preserved rooms or in a new meeting and worship space.

"In early New England, a Congregational meetinghouse was used for public worship as well as a place where townspeople could gather to discuss, deliberate and decide on the most pressing issues of the day," he said. "The Micah House and Chapel will be a place to continue this tradition of the historic meetinghouse."

It will be a significant project with a projected cost of $950,000. The church has raised more than $900,000 through a capital campaign.

"With the town's permission via a limited building permit, interior demolition began last spring with plaster and lath removal," said Jonathan Russell, chairman of the committee overseeing the project. "In November 2016 we removed the last of the plaster and are now removing interior trim, doors, moldings and paneling. All salvageable wood is being carefully removed and catalogued for possible reinstallation or reuse elsewhere."

He said the group is nearly done with paperwork for a special building permit.

"We hope to have those approvals soon and anticipate exterior demolition of the kitchen ell, then all siding, trim, windows and planks beginning in March," he said. "After we've completed sweat-equity demolition, we turn the building over to our contractor, George Fay, hopefully by the end of March. The entire roof will be removed and the remaining structure will be lifted. The old field stone foundation will be dug out, the stones saved for use in landscaping, and a new concrete foundation dug and poured for the old and new structures. Construction will proceed through the summer and fall. We anticipate a ribbon cutting by early 2018."

Taylor explained why the congregation chose "Micah House" as the structure's new name.

"The Micah House and Chapel will be a sacred space for spiritual renewal, conversation and learning, community-building and community-engagement, discipleship and worship," he said. "People will gather to hear anew and to celebrate the call of the Biblical prophet Micah, 'to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.' Through learning and conversation together, people young and old of the First Church community, the interfaith community and beyond will recommit to engagement in the world to seek God's justice, peace and compassion for all of God's children." **GL**

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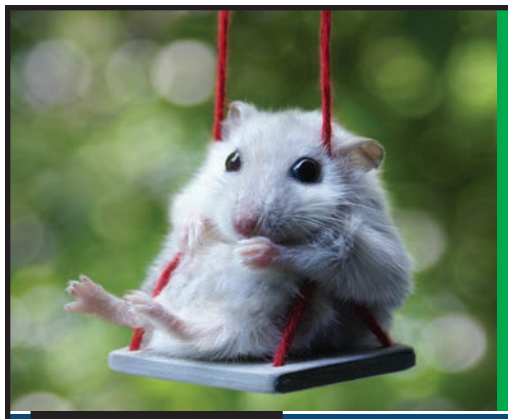

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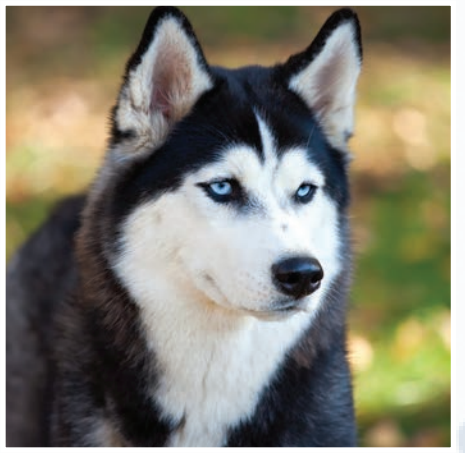

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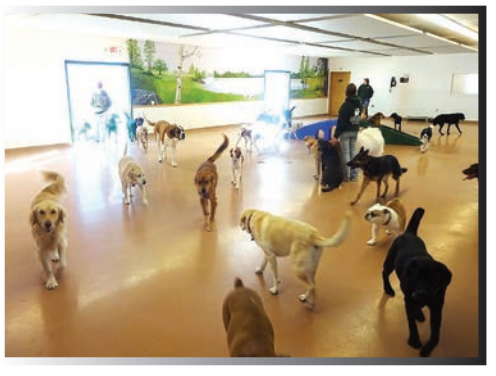

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Note from Nancy

A surprising twist

"Be careful what you wish for, because you might get it" is a well-known and often quoted expression. Anyone hoping to climb their family tree should consider this variation: "Be careful what you look for, because you might find it."

I used this space a couple of months ago to share my new interest in my ancestors and promised to look into the Canadian branches of my family tree.

Shortly after it ran, I heard from Susan Davies Sit, a local woman who's an expert in genealogy and who offered to share some tips over coffee. I accepted. My life hasn't been the same since.

I'm a voracious reader who hasn't had time to read, an obsessive jigsaw puzzler who hasn't even taken a puzzle out of the box, let alone solved one. I'm hooked, and I'm freaked out by what I've uncovered.

I always knew that my mother and her family moved to Connecticut from Halifax, Nova Scotia, but nobody – not my mother or my grandmother or my aunts or uncles – ever said a word about why they left.

I had misinterpreted a list of "Alien passengers applying for admission to the United States" and thought they left Canada in 1920 when my mother was two. A friend looked at the same hand-written document and said no, she was two months old, not two years. That means they came here in 1918. Why would this young couple pack up and move to another country with four children, ages 6, 4, 2, and two months? Couldn't they have waited?

Answers: (a) desperation, and (b) no, they couldn't.

Susan went home after our get-together and started sending me information, including the names of my great-grandmother and great-grandfather, whom I knew nothing about. I spent the evening poking around online trying to learn more and ended up finding details about both of them in a family tree posted by a man in Nova Scotia who's probably something like my fourth cousin three or four times removed. I contacted him – reporters are good at finding people and fearless about approaching strangers – and he replied immediately with more useful information. We corresponded a few more times until nearly midnight.

When I woke up the next morning I found that he'd sent an entry from the Book of Remembrance, which lists victims of the huge explosion that destroyed much of Halifax 100 years ago.

There was my great-grandfather, who, according to the coroner's report, died three weeks after the explosion from shock and exposure.

A map – did I mention that I became somewhat obsessed with this? – indicating the effects of the explosion in color-coded detail, showed that their house was burned to rubble.

My grandfather's family, including my grandmother, who was pregnant with my mother at the time of the explosion, lived a couple of blocks away on the same street. My grandfather was a machinist and likely had no place to work because most of the industrial north side of Halifax was obliterated, or at least severely damaged, by the blast. Getting on that train with three little kids and an infant probably looked pretty good in comparison to the alternative.

A few words about the explosion, since it took place 100 years ago in a different country and isn't something most people in the United States are familiar with:

Around 9 a.m. on December 6, the Imo, a Belgian relief ship, collided with the Mont Blanc, a French ship filled with – think about this figure for a minute – more than 2,500 of tons of explosives. Most people in the Halifax area had no idea that a 2.9-kiloton bomb was floating just offshore.

The collision itself didn't cause major damage, but when the Imo reversed and pulled out of the Mont Blanc's hull, sparks ignited barrels of fuel on the ship's deck. When the explosives on board blew a few minutes later, the shock wave and fires caused by flaming debris killed nearly 2,000 people and injured more than 9,000. It was the biggest man-made explosion in recorded history until two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan in 1945.

And as horrible as it must have been, it's also apparently why my mother's family left Canada, and how I came to be.

– Nancy Thompson

glastonbury LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

A Warm, Snowy winter...

Meteorological Winter is defined as the months of December, January and February. For the Greater Hartford Area, records have been kept since 1905 and are currently maintained at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks. So how did this winter compare to others?

The average temperature for the season was 33.0° ... that's 3.9° above normal and makes this past winter, 2016-17, the 10th warmest! This is just one year after the 2nd warmest winter (in 2015-16, the average temperature was 35.1°– just 0.1° away from the record warmest, the winter of 2001-02). Last winter, records were also set for the number of 50° and 60° days.

At Bridgeport (another official recording station in Connecticut), January went down as the warmest on record at 6.8° above normal. It was then followed by one of the warmest Februarys, the 28 days averaged 6.0° above normal.

During the course of the season, Windsor Locks had 8.71" of precipitation (rain, plus the water equivalent of snow, sleet and ice), this was 0.85" below average. Total snowfall was 41.2", an impressive 10.5" above average (a daily snowfall record was set on February 9th, with Blizzard Chris – 15.5" was received, breaking the prior record of 13.0" from 1969).

When making comparisons to 'normal' ... a 30-year span of time from 1981 to 2010 is used. **GL**

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Living *Spaces*

Effortlessly chic

The absence of color is all the rage in home decorating

White is a versatile color in home decorating and renovation. White helps any space look effortlessly chic, blends well with just about any color and can be incorporated into various design styles — from modern to traditional.

While the color white is always trendy, the paint manufacturers Benjamin Moore chose white (Simply White OC-117) as its "it" color for 2016. White can be used nearly anywhere inside and outside the home. Improving interior and exterior spaces with white elements is easier than you might think, and it instantly can make anything look as good as new.

Kitchen

While rich cherrywood cabinets and deeply hued granite countertops have long been popular in kitchens, creamy white cabinets paired with blonde wood countertops can work together to make kitchens seem open and airy. If all white is not your thing, brighten up kitchen spaces with white canisters, cookie jars and a fresh bouquet of white flowers to add instant appeal.

Living Room

Use white as a base color for living room spaces so you can build on it with other hues on pillows and draperies, mixing and matching however you see fit.

Homeowners who have children and/or pets should look for furniture with removable slipcovers. This way they're easily removed and laundered.

Bathroom

White bathrooms look fresh and are easy to clean and maintain. White tiles provide a classic look. Include colored bath mats, towels and shower curtains to break up the white as you see fit. A neutral white base makes it easy to switch out color schemes whenever you feel like it.

Bedroom

Feminine and fresh, white bedrooms may not be the first choice for novice designers. If the prospect of white on white seems too sterile, offset deeper hues on bed linens and walls with white furniture. This provides some pop against the darker contrast. Keep in mind that doing a bed up in all white means it will always be easy to find matching sheets and pillowcases, making it possible to ensure everything looks cohesive and crisp.

Outdoors

Use white paint on trims, shutters, mailboxes and more to provide that pop of contrast against the rest of the home.

White complements just about every color, making it a versatile choice on a home's accents regardless of the main exterior color of that home.

White and other light shades will reflect the sun as well, contributing to cooler temperatures on walkways, decks and other structures, which can be advantageous to homeowners who live in warm climates.

Is it any wonder that white continues to be a classic and popular color to use around the home?

Whether you do so with monochromatic roomscapes or accent pieces, you can incorporate white into design plans throughout your home. **GL**

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Living *Spaces*

Picking favorites

Gardeners share special tools

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Anyone who likes to garden knows that you need some basic tools just to get started.

However, Sarah Bailey of UConn Extension in West Hartford said you don't need a shed full of implements to be successful.

"I can do a substantial amount of my routine gardening tasks with two tools: a trowel and my pruners. I have a variety of trowels in convenient locations, but one pair of pruners travels with me everywhere. I have holes in the back pocket of most of my pants and shorts where the pruners have worn

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Sarah Bailey of UConn Extension in West Hartford said you don't need a shed full of implements to be successful. "I can do a substantial amount of my routine gardening tasks with two tools: a trowel and my pruners. I have a variety of trowels in convenient locations, but one pair of pruners travels with me everywhere."

through," she said.

Bailey, who serves as state extension master gardener coordinator, Hartford County Master gardener coordinator and youth gardening coordinator, finds many uses for the pruners.

"I use them for cutting twine, trimming small branches and non-woody plant material, snipping off diseased or pest-infested plant tips, and plenty of mundane tasks such as opening plastic packaging of plant ties or hose parts. They are a critical element of hose repair, which seems to be an ongoing process," she said.

"There are plenty of very good pruners available, but my longtime partner is a pair of Felco #7 pruners. Along with a well-balanced design that puts your wrist at a comfortable angle, they have a rotating bottom handle that allows you to easily change your grip. When you are doing a lot of pruning at one time, this makes all the difference in how your hand feels at the end of the day. The other great feature is the replaceable blades, especially given the amount of abuse I subject them to. The #7 is a large pair of pruners. I've heard folks with smaller hands complain that they are uncomfortable, but that is the only negative comment I've heard. They are not cheap, but they last forever. I have had my pair for over 20 years and they're still going strong."

The feel of a tool is important even for someone who grows plants professionally, such as Brenda Sullivan of Thompson Street Farm in Glastonbury.

"Hand garden tools can take on a personal attachment for gardeners with their size, weight and handle type being key individual factors. Even a veteran gardener like myself can become frustrated with an excessively heavy, bulky or otherwise inefficient tool," she noted. "Sometimes a gardener must think outside the box and adapt a tool from someplace else as I did with my most prized garden tool: an old masonry trowel.

"This beautiful tool from the early part of the 20th century was left to me by Uncle Larry who inherited it from his father after he died in the 1930s. To my surprise, the worn handle from decades of use is the perfect size for my hand, and the trowel is well-balanced and not too heavy even after hours of use. This is important because during the growing season, I prepare 50-plus microgreen trays a week so the use of a heavy hand tool fatigues my hand and wrist," she continued. "I also love this trowel for its tapered end that fits perfectly in the corners of the tray allowing for even soil distribution as well as for its efficiency as a transplanting tool in the garden."

Cheryl DePrest of Wethersfield, founder of Olga Bobbi skincare products, also has a favorite in her garden. In her case, however, her favorite is a "who" and not a "what": her husband Bruce DePrest, chief meteorologist at Channel 3.

"Bruce and I love to garden and this is a project that we enjoy together.

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Living *Spaces*

Brenda Sullivan of Thompson Street Farm in Glastonbury is attached to this masonry trowel, which has been passed down through the generations. Right: Cheryl DePrest, founder of the Olga Bobbi line of skincare, jokes that her husband, Channel 3 Chief Meteorologist Bruce DePrest (pictured), is her favorite to work with in the garden. The two have an extensive organic garden.

We have a perennial garden and an organic herb/vegetable garden every year. Our herb garden is always the same. Parsley, basil, sage, thyme, oregano, tarragon, lemon verbena and rosemary are a must," Cheryl DePrest said. "This year our vegetable garden will consist of many varieties of green beans; a variety of peppers, including habanero, Bruce's favorite; cucumbers; and several kinds of cherry tomatoes – we like them sweet."

They grow everything organically, and Cheryl uses the lemon verbena, rosemary and cucumbers in soaps for her Olga Bobbi line.

"Bruce loves making his yummy marinara sauce with fresh basil and oregano," Cheryl shared. "Last year we had so much basil that I was able to make 10 batches of pesto, some of which we froze for the winter. This is a family favorite." **GL**

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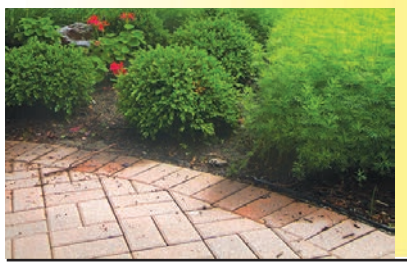

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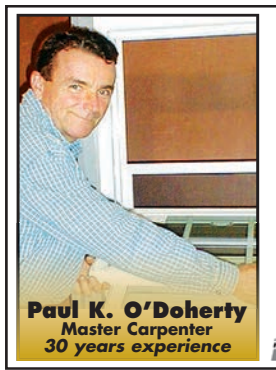

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Living *Spaces*

How to transform a fixer-upper

Investing in a fixer-upper requires a leap of faith and a vision of what the home can look like in the future. Turning a real estate lemon into lemonade requires certain skills and a good measure of patience.

The real estate market will always have its ups and downs, but real estate is an oft-profitable investment. Real estate investors do their investing for various reasons.

Some see a house as a place to hang their hats for years and years, while others look at properties as nothing more than investments.

Buying a home with the intent to fix it up and resell it is called a "fix and flip."

In such situations, investors buy homes at below-market prices before refurbishing the homes with the goal of recouping their initial investment and then some when the homes are ultimately put back on the market.

Flipping has become popular for both expert remodelers and novice investors. RealtyTrac, the nation's leading source for comprehensive housing data, noted in its "Year-End and Q4 2015 U.S. Home Flipping" report that 5.5 percent of all single-family home and condo sales during the year were flipped properties. This marked an increase from the same time the previous year.

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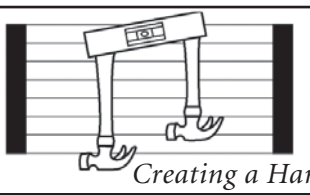

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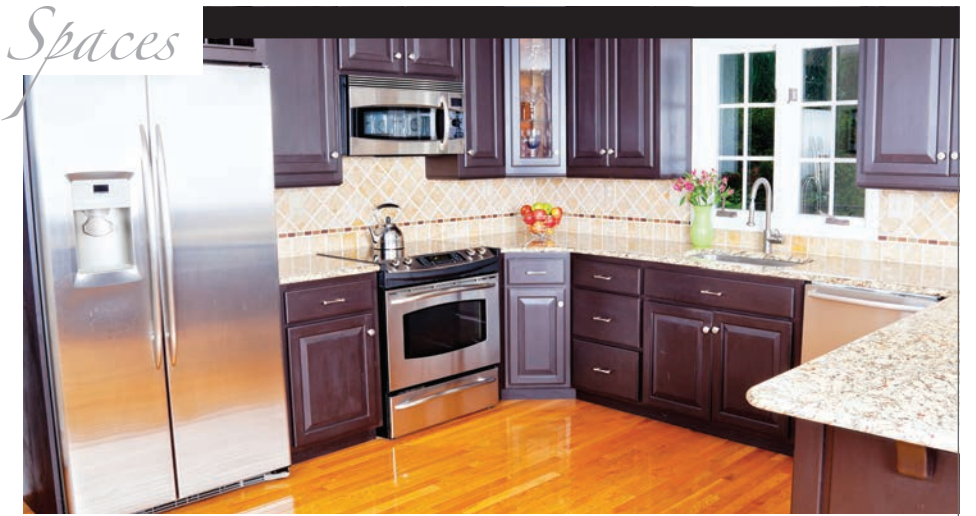
Renovate with an eye toward prospective buyers' needs. Keep things neutral and accommodating. Research the latest trends to understand what buyers might be seeking in a home.



in some instances, a coat of paint and some new accents may be all you need to transform a space. For example, if kitchen cabinets are in good condition, see if they can be refaced or painted instead of replaced entirely.

Investing in a fixer-upper requires a leap of faith and a vision of what the home can look like in the future. Turning a real estate lemon into lemonade requires certain skills and a good measure of patience. The following are some guidelines to get anyone started.

• Don't bite off more than you can chew. Make an honest assessment of your abilities and which renovations, if any, you can handle. If you are unskilled or inexperienced working with your hands, then it can be easy for an investment property to quickly become a money pit. Before purchasing a property, hire a trained home inspector to tour the home with you and point out all of the areas that will need renovation. With this list, begin getting estimates on how much money the work will entail. Determine if this fits with your budget or not. You do not want to invest so much that it exceeds what you could feasibly recoup when it comes time to sell.

• Overlook cosmetic things when visiting properties. Cosmetic issues include all of the easily replaceable items in a home, such as carpeting, appliances, interior paint colors and cabinetry. Focus on the bones of the house — the architectural integrity and those little touches that you envision having a "wow" factor.

• Seek the help of experts. Some flippers think they'll save the most money by doing all of the work themselves. This isn't always the case. Professional architects, designers and contractors may help you save money. Contractors have an intimate knowledge of where to buy materials and may be able to negotiate prices based on wholesale or trade costs. In addition, experts can help you avoid common pitfalls

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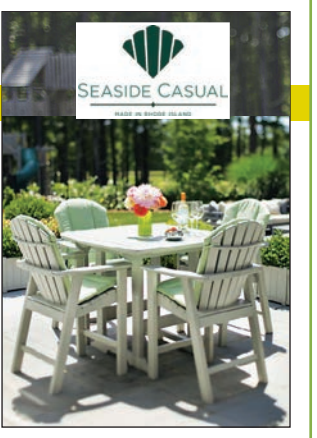

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• Recognize that not everything must be completely redone. Realize that, in some instances, a coat of paint and some new accents may be all you need to transform a space.

For example, if kitchen cabinets are in good condition, see if they can be refaced or painted instead of replaced entirely. Install new door pulls/handles to add visual interest. Look for some ready-made items, such as bookshelves, instead of installing custom carpentry.

• Think about what the buyer wants and not what you want. Renovate with an eye toward prospective buyers' needs. Keep things neutral and accommodating. Research the latest trends to understand what buyers might be seeking in a home.

You want potential buyers to envision themselves moving right in.

Renovating a fixer-upper takes time, but it can be a worthwhile project, and one that can help anyone turn a profit in a booming real estate market. **GL**

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Seeing green: How to help your lawn bounce back from winter

Lawns are exposed to the elements throughout the year, and each season brings its own unique set of challenges. Summer heat waves can make it hard for lawns to maintain their lush green appeal, while the falling leaves of autumn can threaten root systems if not handled properly. Winter frost and snow also can pose a threat to lawns, leaving homeowners with some work to do when spring arrives.

Spring is a season of revival, and that spirit of rejuvenation extends to lawns. When the last vestiges of winter begin to disappear, homeowners can dust off their gardening gloves and start taking steps to revitalize their lawns for the months ahead.

• Look for signs of damage. Winter can be hard on lawns, so it's important for homeowners to look for signs of damage before they begin planning any springtime landscaping projects. Salt damage can occur in areas that received heavy snowfall over the winter. Many communities use rock salt to de-ice snow- and ice-covered roads, and that rock salt is largely made up of sodium chloride, which can draw moisture from grass and cause it to brown. Salt trucks used during winter storms often spit salt out onto lawns, so don't be surprised if you notice brown spots on your grass, especially in those areas closest to the road. Winter lawn damage may also be caused by voles, burrowing mouse-like rodents that make paths beneath the snow to hide from predators and feed on grass blades and roots. Lawns with distinctly matted areas may also have been damaged by snow mold that can weaken turf.

• Consult a professional landscaper. Homeowners with considerable experience tending to damaged lawns can no doubt identify and address problems on their own. That's because many problems are a result of the weather, which tends to be similar and produce similar problems from one year to the next. But inexperienced homeowners should consult professional landscapers before attempting to address problems on their own. Winter lawn damage may be caused by a variety of factors that can produce similar symptoms, and professional landscapers can identify the culprits behind such damage and provide the most effective solutions to restore the lawn.

• Remove debris. A light raking can help remove any debris that accumulated over the winter. Such debris, which may include fallen branches and fallen leaves left behind from the final days of fall, can prevent lawns from getting the sun and water they need to thrive. Remove this debris, but make sure the grass is not frozen when you do, as walking on frozen grass can cause further damage.

• Let the grass grow. Mowing the lawn is a chore that's reserved for spring, summer and maybe early fall, but it's important that homeowners don't jump the gun and mow too early after winter.

A patient approach allows the grass to reestablish itself, so let it grow a little higher than you normally would before the first cut. When the grass is roughly 4.5 inches high, you can cut it down to three inches and then maintain your normal mowing routine throughout the rest of spring and summer. GL

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Living *Spaces*

Paint your home exterior like a pro

Painting is an inexpensive way to transform just about any space. Many people paint the interiors of their homes, but home exteriors also can undergo dramatic makeovers with fresh coats of paint. Timing the job right and heeding some tips from professionals and do-it-yourselfers who have tread the painting path before you can make the job go smoothly.

Consider the time of year

Consider local weather patterns and forecasts when planning an exterior painting project. Choose a time of year when there is little rain and low humidity, such as autumn. Keep in mind that the paint will require a couple of days to dry completely and cure, and that can be difficult in damp weather. Don't hamper the final outcome with poor timing.

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Prepare the painting surfaces

Resist the temptation to start painting straight away. Paint may not adhere to unprepared surfaces, and dirt and other debris may show through and mar the finished product. Repainting a home's exterior will likely involve removing peeling or chipping paint prior to making your first strokes.

Wear protective gear when scraping, sanding or brushing old paint, as such tasks can generate dust that can be dangerous to inhale, particularly if the old paint contains lead.

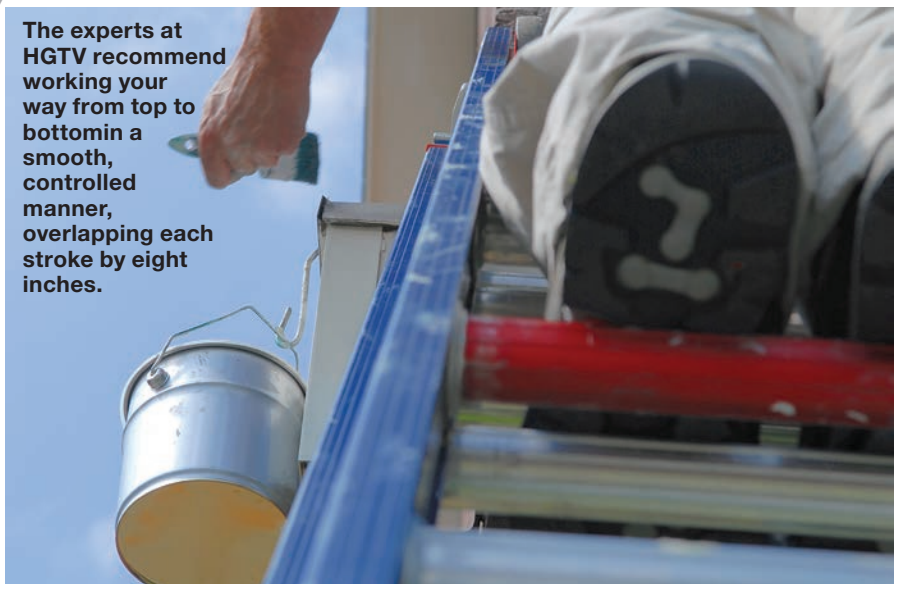
Employ a chlorine bleach solution to kill any mildew and to scrub any dirt from the house. In addition, repair any cracks or imperfections. For example, if you're painting stucco, you may have to fill in any pitting or holes. Use this opportunity to inspect caulking around windows and doors. Recaulk as needed to seal up drafty areas or those that may cause water infiltration prior to painting.

Prime and cover stains

It may be a little extra work, but apply a quality primer as the first coat to hide any imperfections, such as wood knots or discoloration from weathering. Primer provides a smooth, even surface upon which to put your paint color. Once you have applied the primer, test your paint color in a small, inconspicuous spot to see how the color looks in the daylight. You do not want to paint the entire home only to find out you dislike the color.

Try these painting techniques

Rent a paint sprayer for large surface areas. The sprayer will produce a more uniform application and is less time-consuming than painting everything with a brush or roller. Make sure you've chosen a high-quality paint, as the added expense is worth it if the paint lasts longer and coats more evenly. Also, if you have purchased multiple cans of paint, mix them all in one large bucket to ensure the same color; otherwise, the colors may not match perfectly.



The experts at HGTV recommend working your way from top to bottomin a smooth, controlled manner, overlapping each stroke by eight inches.

The experts at HGTV recommend working your way from top to bottom in a smooth, controlled manner, overlapping each stroke by eight inches. Trim and hard-to-reach areas should be left for brush work so you can maintain control over your tools.

If you are painting areas like steps or staircases, consider adding a little fine-grain sand to the paint to improve traction, as paint can be slippery when wet.

If painting your home's exterior is beyond your capabilities, hire a professional.

He or she will get the work done in a timely manner, and you can rest assured that the job will be done correctly. **GL**

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Harmful and helpful insects in the garden

Although it's virtually impossible to count them, insects are the most diverse group of organisms on the planet. At any given time, it is estimated that there are around 10 quintillion individual insects living. Gardeners grow frustrated when seeing their gardens infested with insects, but gardeners would be wise to learn which insects are hurting their gardens and which can actually help gardens in the long run before eradicating them.

Harmful

Aphids: These insects suck on the juice needed to sustain plants, particularly when they congregate.

Bald-faced hornet: Hornets tend to be an aggressive species that can sting repeatedly. Should you find a nest near an entertaining space or garden, it can cause trouble.

Carpenter ants: These ants will burrow into wood causing damage. They may compromise any wooden structure in and around a home.

Locusts: Various species of locust can damage plants and crops due to their voracious appetites.

Treehoppers: These small, green insects mimic the look of leaves, and their appetites can affect crops and gardens.

Red pavement ant: As they feed on all manner of human food, these ants can quickly overtake areas with their staggering numbers and deliver painful bites.

Grasshoppers: Certain grasshoppers, like the red-legged grasshopper, can decimate food crops and transfer parasites to birds when eaten as prey.

Caterpillars: Many caterpillars, the precursor to adult moths, will feed constantly on leaves, stems and other parts of plants.

Helpful

Antlion: A foe of ants, they'll help eat and control ant populations and pollinate flowers. They pose no threat to humans, either.

Big dipper firefly: These colorful insects feast on earthworms, slugs and snails during the larval stage.

Garden spiders: Although some spiders can be venomous, many are handy to have around the garden. They'll help control pest populations that can damage plants and crops.

Dragonflies: These arial artists that zip around the yard are consuming smaller insects that would otherwise pester plants and humans.

Blue-winged wasp: This wasp attacks the larvae of Japanese beetles, helping to control beetle populations.

Bees and butterflies: Butterflies and bees are some of the best pollinators and add whimsy to gardens. **GL**

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